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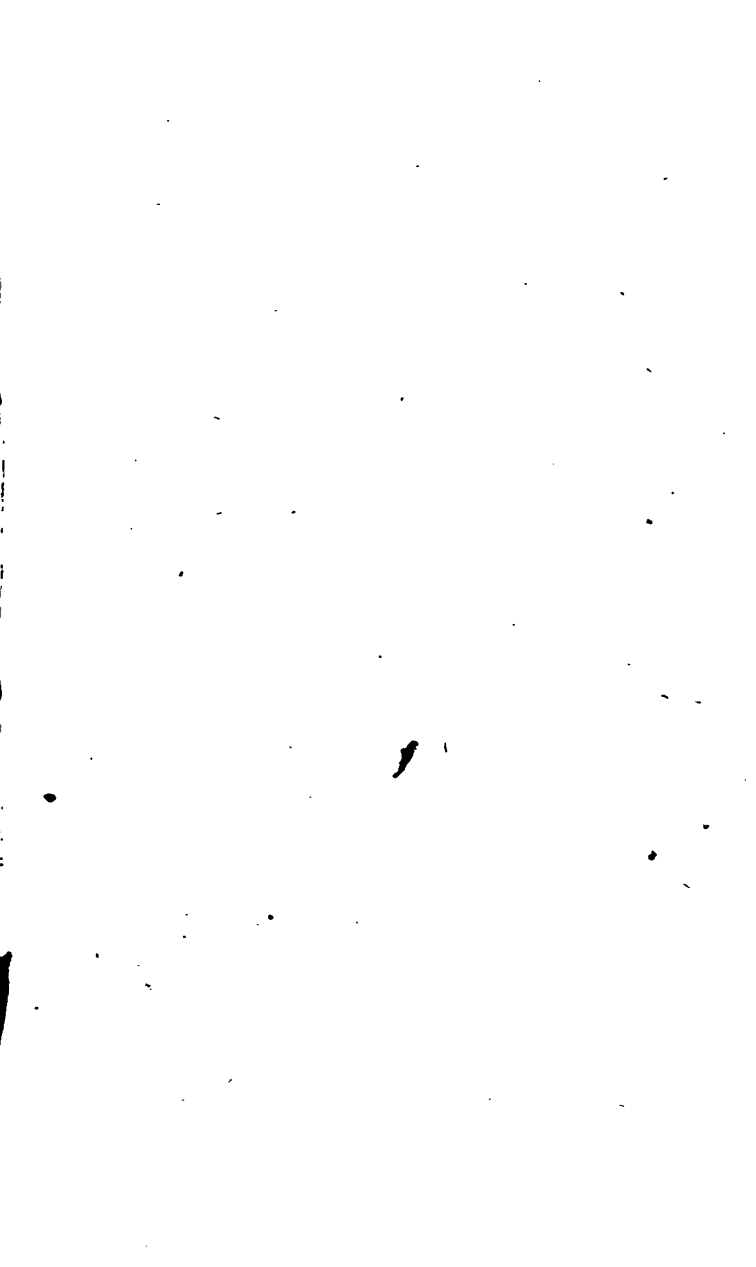
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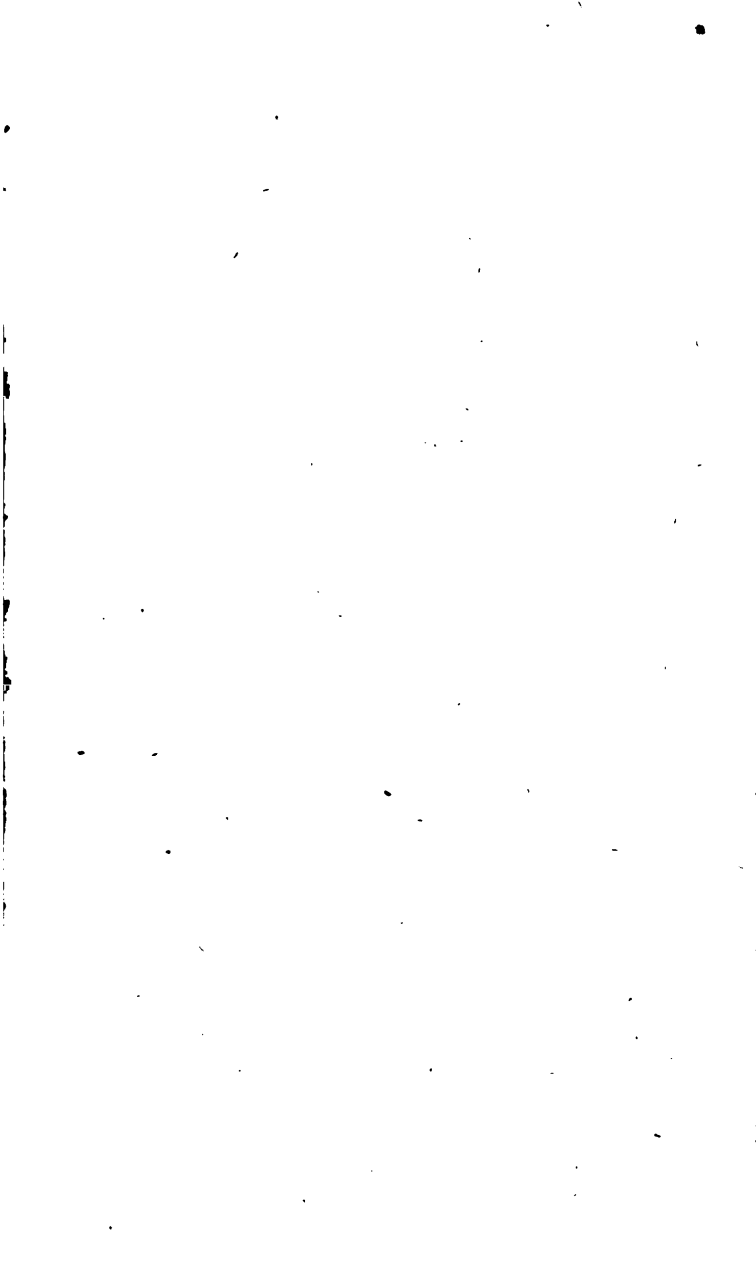


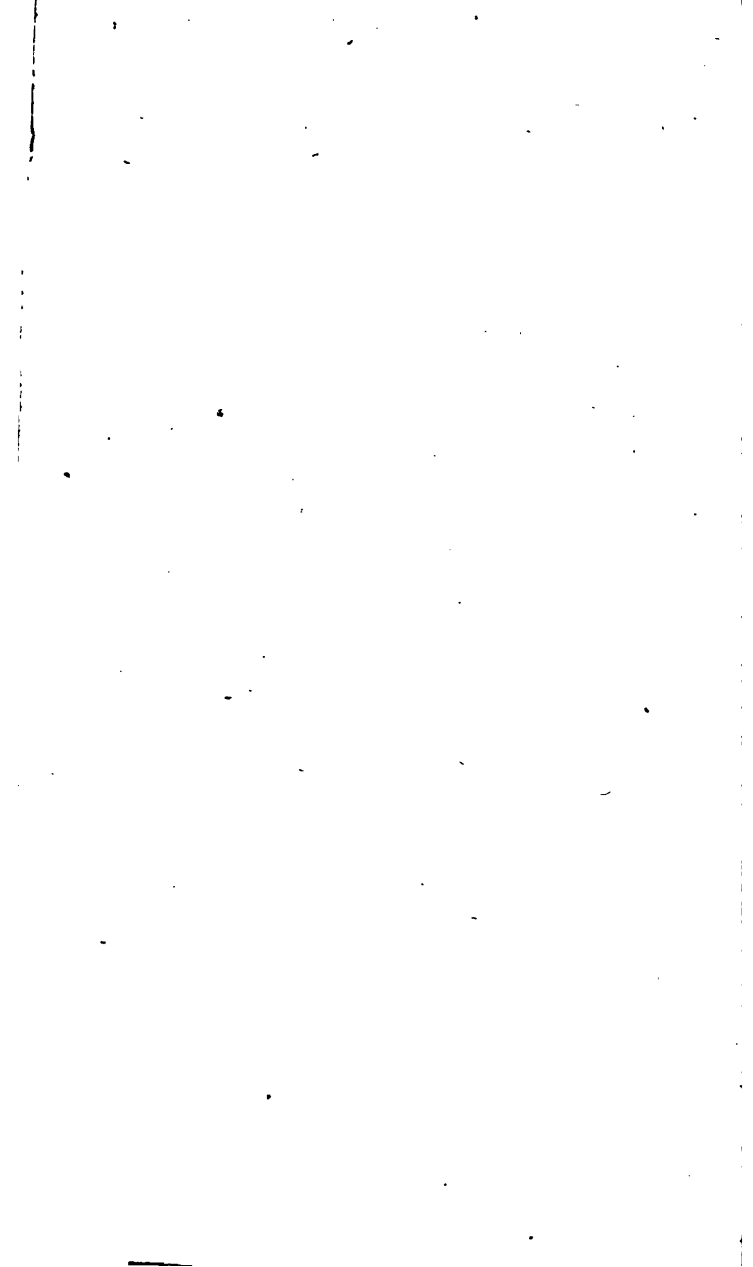
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THE
CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY.

A Tale.

—w—w—w—
IN FOUR VOLUMES.
—w—w—w—

BY
REGINA MARIA ROCHE,

AUTHOR OF

THE HOUSES OF OSMA AND ALMERIA, TRECOTHICK BOWER,
MONASTERY OF ST. COLUMB, &c. &c.

—w—w—w—
A matchless pair,
With equal virtue form'd, and equal grace;
The same, distinguish'd by their sex alone:
Hers the mild lustre of the blooming morn,
And his the radiance of the risen day.

THOMSON.

—>>@<<—
EIGHTH EDITION.
—>>@<<—

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED AT THE
Minerva-Press,
FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.
LEADENHALL-STREET.
1816.



TO

MAJOR-GENERAL



SIR ADAM WILLIAMSON, K. B.



SIR,

I SHOULD not have presumed to intrude upon your notice the amusement of my leisure hours, had it not afforded me an opportunity I have long anxiously desired, of expressing the grateful sentiments which your great, your unsolicited goodness, to one of my nearest and most beloved connexions, had inspired me with: yet, ardently as I have longed, I almost shrink from it, through a conviction of being unable to utter what I feel; and
nothing

nothing but a wish of avowing, in some degree, my obligations for those conferred upon one so dear to me, and a hope that you may make allowances for so faint, so imperfect a tribute of gratitude and respect, could have tempted me to avail myself of it.

Happy, as you must be, in the silent plaudits of your own heart, any thing of this kind is not wanting to complete its satisfaction; yet it surely cannot be unpleasing to a generous mind to know, that the favours it confers are properly estimated.

I shall no longer, Sir, encroach upon your time; but, ere I conclude, permit me to offer my sincere congratulations on your safe arrival in this kingdom, where, I trust, you may long continue to enjoy
every

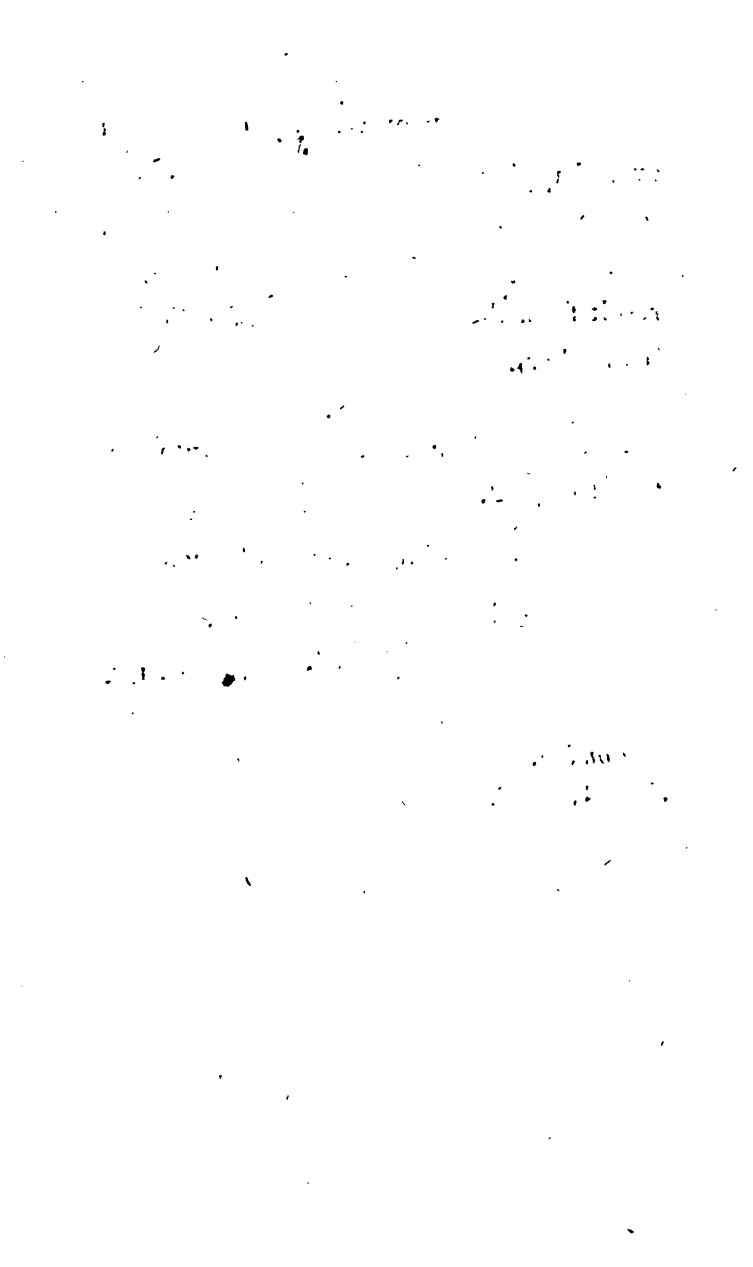
every happiness this world can afford : one source of happiness you have, at least, secured to yourself—that which must ever result from the consciousness of diffusing it to others.

I have the honour to be, Sir, with the truest respect,

Your most obliged, most obedient,
and very humble servant,

REGINA MARIA ▲ ROCHE.

London,
June 1, 1796.



THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY.

CHAP. I.

Yellow sheafs from rich Ceres the cottage had crown'd,
Green rushes were strew'd on the floor,
The casements sweet woodbine crept wantonly round,
And deck'd the sod seats at the door. CUNNINGHAM.

“**HAIL**, sweet asylum of my infancy! Content and innocence reside beneath your humble roof, and charity, unboastful of the good it renders. Hail, ye venerable trees! my happiest hours of childish gaiety were passed beneath your shelter; then, careless as the birds that sung upon your boughs, I laughed the hours away, nor knew of evil. Here surely I shall be guarded from duplicity; and, if not happy, at least in some degree tranquil: here unmolested may I wait, till the rude storm of sorrow is overblown, and my father's arms are again expanded to receive me.”

Such were the words of Amanda, as the chaise (which she had hired at a neighbouring village, on

quitting the mail) turned down a little verdant lane, almost darkened by old trees, whose interwoven branches allowed her scarcely a glimpse of her nurse's cottage, till she had reached the door.

A number of tender recollections rushing upon her mind, rendered her almost unable to alight; but the nurse and her husband, who had been impatiently watching for the arrival of their fondling, assisted her; and the former, obeying the dictates of nature and affection, half stifled her with caresses. The latter respectfully kissed her hand, and dropped a tear of unutterable joy upon it—"Lort," he said, "he was surprised, to be sure, at the alteration a few years had made in her person; why, it seemed to him as if it was only the other day since he had carried her about in his arms, quite a little fairy." Then he begged to know how his "tear old captain was, and Mr. Oscar? and whether the latter was not grown a very fine youth?"

Amanda, smiling through her tears, endeavoured to answer his inquiries; but she was so much affected by her feelings, as to be scarcely able to speak: and when, by her desire, he went out to discharge the chaise, and assist the young man (who had travelled with her from London) to bring in her luggage, her head sunk upon her nurse's bosom, whose arms encircled her waist—"My dear faithful nurse," she sobbed, "your poor child is again returned, to seek an asylum from you."—"And she is heartily welcome," replied the good creature, crying herself;

"and

"and I have taken care to have every thing so nice, and so tidy, and so comfortable, that I warrant you the greatest lady in the land need not disdain your apartments: and here are two little girls, as well as myself, that will always be ready to attend, serve, and obey you. This is Ellen; your own foster-sister; and this is Betsey, the little thing I had in the cradle when you went away: and I have besides, though I say it myself, that should not say it, two as fine lads as you could wish to see; they are now at work at a farmer's hard by, but they will be here presently. Thank God, we are all happy, though obliged to earn our own bread; but 'tis sweeter for that reason, since labour gives us health to enjoy it, and contentment blesses us all."

Amanda affectionately embraced the two girls, who were the pictures of health and cheerfulness, and was then conducted into a little parlour, which, with a small bed-chamber adjoining it, was appropriated to her use. The neatness of the room was truly pleasing; the floor was nicely sanded, the hearth was dressed with "flowers and fennel gay," and the chimney-piece adorned with a range of broken tea-cups, "wisely kept for show;" a clock ticked behind the door, and an ebony cupboard displayed a profusion of the showiest ware the country could produce.

And now the nurse, on "hospitable thought intent," hurried from Amanda to prepare her dinner. The chicken, as she said herself, was ready to pop

down in a minute; Ellen tied the asparagus, and Betsey laid the cloth; Edwin drew his best cider, and having brought it in himself, retired to entertain his guest in the kitchen (Amanda's travelling companion), before whom he had already set some of his most substantial fare.

Dinner, in the opinion of Amanda, was served in a moment; but her heart was too full to eat, though pressed to do so with the utmost tenderness—a tenderness which, in truth, was the means of overcoming her. When insulted by malice, or oppressed by cruelty, the heart can assume a stern fortitude foreign to its nature; but this seeming apathy vanishes at the voice of kindness, as the rigid frost of winter melts before the gentle influence of the sun; and tears, gushing tears of gratitude and sensibility, express its yielding feelings. Sacred are such tears—they flow from the sweet source of social affection: the good alone can shed them.

Her nurse's sons soon returned from their labour—two fine nut-brown youths: they had been the companions of her infant sports, and she spoke to them with the most engaging affability. Domestic bliss and rural felicity Amanda had always been accustomed to, till within a short period; her attachment to them was still as strong as ever; and, had her father been with her, she would have been happy.

It was now about the middle of June, and the whole country was glowing with luxuriant beauty. The cottage was in reality a comfortable commodious farm-house;

farm-house; it was situated in North Wales; and the romantic scenery surrounding it was highly pleasing to a disposition like Amanda's, which delighted equally in the sublime and beautiful. The front of the cottage was almost covered with woodbine, intermingled with vines; and the lane already mentioned formed a shady avenue up to the very door: one side overlooked a deep valley, winding amongst hills clad in the liveliest verdure; a clear stream running through it turned a mill in its course, and afforded a salutary coolness to the herds which ruminated on its banks: the other side commanded a view of rich pastures, terminated by a thick grove, whose natural vistas gave a view of cultivated farms, a small irregular village, the spire of its church, and a fine old castle, whose stately turrets rose above the trees surrounding them.

The farm-yard, at the back of the cottage, was stocked with poultry, and all the implements of rural industry: the garden was divided from it by a rude paling, interwoven with honeysuckles and wild roses—the part appropriated to vegetables divided from the part sacred to Flora, by rows of fruit-trees; a craggy precipice hung over it, covered with purple and yellow flowers, thyme, and other odoriferous herbs, which afforded browse to three or four goats, that skipped about in playful gambols; a silver stream trickled down the precipice, and, winding around a plantation of shrubs, fell, with a gentle murmur, into the valley. Beneath a project-

ing fragment of the rock a natural recess was formed, thickly lined with moss, and planted round with a succession of beautiful flowers:

Here, scatter'd wild, the lily of the vale
 Its balmy essence breathes; here cowslips hang
 The dewy head, and purple violets lurk;
 With all the lowly children of the shade. THOMSON.

Of those scenes Amanda had but an imperfect recollection, such a faint idea as we retain of a confused but agreeable dream, which, though we cannot explain, leaves a pleasing impression behind. Peculiar circumstances had driven her from the shelter of a parent's arms, to seek security in retirement, at this abode of simplicity and peace. Here the perturbation of fear subsided; but the soft melancholy of her soul at times was heightened, when she reflected that, in this very place, an unfortunate mother had expired, almost at the moment of giving her birth.

Amanda was now about nineteen: a description of her face and person would not do her justice, as it never could convey a full idea of the ineffable sweetness and sensibility of the former, or the striking elegance and beautiful proportion of the latter. Sorrow had faded her vivid bloom; for the distresses of her father weighed heavy on her heart, and the blossom drooped with the tree which supported it. Her agonized parent witnessing this sudden change, sent her into Wales, as much for health as for security: she was ordered goat's whey and gentle exercise; but she firmly believed that consolation in her

Her father's account, could alone effect a cure. Though the rose upon her cheek was pale, and the lustre of her eyes was fled, she was, from those circumstances (if less dazzling to the eye), more affecting to the heart: cold and unfeeling indeed must that one have been, which could see her unmoved; for hers was that interesting face and figure, which had power to fix the wandering eye, and change the gaze of admiration into the throb of sensibility; nor was her mind inferior to the form that enshrined it.

She now exerted her spirits, in gratitude to her humble but benevolent friends. Her arrival had occasioned a little festival at the cottage: the tea-things, which were kept more for shew than use in the ebony cupboard, were now taken out, and carried, by her desire, to the recess in the garden; whither Mrs. Edwin followed the family with a hot cake, Amanda thought large enough to serve half the principality.

The scene was delightful, and well calculated to banish all sadness, but despair: Amanda was therefore cheered; for she was too much the child of piety ever to have felt its baneful influence. In the midst of her troubles, she still looked up, with humble confidence, to that Power who has promised never to forsake the righteous.

The harmless jest, the jocund laugh, went round, and Amanda enjoyed the innocent gaiety; for a benevolent mind will ever derive pleasure from the happiness of others. The declining sun now gave softer beauties to the extensive scenery; the lowing of the

cattle was faintly echoed by the neighbouring hills ; the cheerful carol of the peasant floated on the evening gale, that stole perfumes from beds of flowers, and wafted them around ; the busy bees had now completed the delicious labour of the day, and, with incessant hummings, sought their various hives ; while

Every copse,
Deep-tangled, tree irregular, and bush,
Were prodigal of harmony.

THOMSON.

To complete the concert, a blind harper, who supported himself by summer rambles through the country ; strolled into the garden ; and, after a plentiful repast of bread and cheese and nut-brown ale, began playing.

The venerable appearance of the musician, the simple melody of his harp, recalled to Amanda's recollection the tales of other times, in which she had so often delighted ; it sent her soul back to the ages of old, to the days of other years, when bards rehearsed the exploits of heroes, and sung the praises of the dead ; “ while the ghosts of those they sung came in their rustling winds, and were seen to bend with joy towards the sound of thier praise.” To proceed, in the beautiful language of Ossian—“ The sound was mournful and low, like the song of the tomb ; such as Fingal heard, when the crowded sighs of his bosom rose : ‘ and some of my heroes are low,’ said the grey-haired king of Morven ; ‘ I hear the sound of death on the harp. Ossian, touch the trembling string ; bid the voice of sorrow rise, that their
spirits

spirits may fly with joy to Morven's woody hills.' He touched the harp before the king: the sound was mournful and low. 'Bend forwards from your clouds,' he said, 'ghosts of my fathers! bend: lay by the red terror of your course. Receive the falling chief, whether he comes from a distant land, or rises from the rolling sea. Let his robe of mist be near; his spear, that is formed of a cloud; place an half-extinguished meteor by his side, in the form of the hero's sword: and oh, let his countenance be lovely, that his friends may delight in his presence. Bend from your clouds,' he said, 'ghosts of my fathers! bend.'

The sweet enthusiasm which arose in Amanda's mind from her present situation, her careful nurse soon put an end to, by reminding her of the heavy dew then falling. Amanda could have staid for hours in the garden; but resigning her inclination to her nurse's, she immediately accompanied her into the house. She soon felt inclined to retire to rest; and after a slight supper of strawberries and cream (which was all they could prevail on her to touch), she withdrew to her chamber, attended by the nurse and her two daughters, who all thought their services requisite; and it was not without much difficulty Amanda persuaded them to the contrary.

Left to solitude, a tender awe stole upon the mind of Amanda, when she reflected that, in this very room, her mother had expired. The recollection of her sufferings—the sorrows her father and self had

experienced since the period of her death—the distresses they still felt, and might yet go through—all raised a sudden agony in her soul, and tears burst forth. She went to the bed, and knelt beside it—“Oh, my mother,” she cried, “if thy departed spirit be permitted to look down upon this world, hear and regard the supplications of thy child, for thy protection amidst the snares which may be spread for her!—Yet,” continued she, after a pause, “that Being, who has taken thee to himself, will, if I continue innocent, extend his guardian care: to Him therefore, to Him be raised the fervent prayer, for rendering abortive every scheme of treachery.”

She prayed with all the fervency of devotion; her wandering thoughts were all restrained, and her passions gradually subsided into a calm. Warmed by a pure and ardent piety—that sacred power, which comes with healing on its wings to the afflicted children of humanity, she felt a placid hope spring in her heart, that whispered to it, all would yet be well.

She arose tranquil and animated. The inhabitants of the cottage had retired to repose; and she heard no sound, save the ticking of the clock from the outside room. She went to the window, and raising the white calico curtain, looked down the valley; it was illuminated by the beams of the moon, which tint the trees with a shadowy silver, and threw a line of radiance on the clear rivulet. All was still, as if creation slept upon the bosom of serenity. Here, while contemplating the scene, a sudden flutter at the window

dow startled her; and she saw, in a moment after, a bird flit across, and perch upon a tree whose boughs shaded the casement. A soft serenade was immediately begun by the sweet and plaintive bird of night.

Amanda at length dropped the curtain, and sought repose: it soon blessed her eyelids, and shed a sweet oblivion over all her cares.

Sleep on, sweet innocent—

And when a soul is found sincerely so,

A thousand liv'ry'd angels lacquey it,

Driving far off all thought of harm or sin.

MILTON.

CHAP. II.

Canst thou bear cold and hunger? Can these limbs,

Fram'd for the tender offices of love,

Endure the bitter gripes of smarting poverty?

When in a bed of straw we shrink together,

And the bleak winds shall whistle round our heads,

Wilt thou talk to me thus,

Thus hush my cares, and shelter me with love?

OTWAY.

FITZALAN, the father of Amanda, was the descendant of an ancient Irish family, which had, however unfortunately attained the summit of its prosperity long before his entrance into life; so that little more than a name, once dignified by illustrious actions, was left to its posterity. The parents of Fitzalan were supported by an employment under Govern-

ment, which enabled them to save a small sum for their son and only child, who, at an early period, became its sole master, by their dying within a short period of each other. As soon as he had in some degree recovered the shock of such calamities, he laid out his little pittance in the purchase of a commission, as a profession best suiting his inclinations and finances.

The war between America and France had then just commenced, and Fitzalan's regiment was amongst the first forces sent to the aid of the former. The scenes of war, though dreadfully affecting to a soul of exquisite sensibility, such as he possessed, had not power to damp the ardour of his spirit; for, with the name, he inherited the hardy resolution of his progenitors.

He had once the good fortune to save the life of a British soldier. He was one of a small party, who, by the treachery of their guides, were suddenly surprised in a wood, through which they were obliged to pass to join another detachment of the army. Their only way, in this alarming exigence, was to retreat to the fort from whence they had but lately issued. Encompassed as they were by the enemy, this was not achieved without the greatest difficulty. Just as they had reached it, Fitzalan saw, far behind them, a poor soldier, who had been wounded on the first onset, just overtaken by two Indians. Yielding to the impulse of compassion, in which all idea of self was lost, Fitzalan hastily turned to his assistance,

ance, and flinging himself between the pursued and the pursuers, he kept them at bay, till the poor creature had reached a place of safety. This action, performed at the imminent hazard of his life, secured him the lasting gratitude of the soldier, whose name was Edwin; the same that now afforded an asylum to his daughter.

Edwin had committed some juvenile indiscretions, which highly incensed his parents: in despair at incurring their resentment, he enlisted with a recruiting party in their neighbourhood; but, accustomed all his life to peace and plenty, he did not by any means relish his new situation. His gratitude to Fitzalan was unbounded—he considered him as the preserver of his life; and on the man's being dismissed who had hitherto attended him as a servant, entreated he might be taken in his place. This entreaty Fitzalan complied with: he was pleased with Edwin's manner; and having heard the little history of his misfortunes, promised, on their return to Europe, to intercede with his friends for him.

During his stay abroad, Fitzalan was promoted to a captain-lieutenancy: his pay was his only support, which of necessity checked the benevolence of a spirit "open as day to melting charity."

On the regiment's return to Europe, he obtained Edwin's discharge, who longed to re-enter upon his former mode of life: he accompanied the penitent himself into Wales, where he was received with the truest rapture. In grief for his loss, his parents had
forgotten

forgotten all resentment for his errors, which indeed had never been very great : they had lost their two remaining children during his absence, and now received him as the sole comfort and hope of their age.

His youthful protector was blessed with the warmest gratitude ; tears filled his fine eyes, as he beheld the pleasure of the parents and the contrition of the son ; and he departed with that heartfelt pleasure which ever attends and rewards an action of humanity.

He now accompanied his regiment into Scotland : they were quartered at a fort in a remote part of that kingdom. Near the fort was a fine old Abbey belonging to the family of Dunreath : the high hills which nearly encompassed it were almost all covered with trees, whose dark shades gave an appearance of gloomy solitude to the building.

The present possessor, the Earl of Dunreath, was now far advanced in life ; twice had he married, in expectation of a male heir to his large estates, and twice he had been disappointed. His first Lady had expired immediately after the birth of a daughter : she had taken under her protection a young female, who, by unexpected vicissitudes in her family, was left destitute of support. On the demise of her patroness, she retired from the Abbey to the house of a kinswoman in its vicinity. The Earl of Dunreath, accustomed to her society, felt his solitude doubly augmented by her absence : he had ever followed the dictates of inclination, and would not disobey
them

them now : ere the term of mourning was expired, he offered her his hand, and was accepted.

The fair orphan, now triumphant mistress of the Abbey, found there was no longer occasion to check her natural propensities : her soul was vain, unfeeling, and ambitious ; and her sudden elevation broke down all the barriers which prudence had hitherto opposed to her passions. She soon gained an absolute ascendancy over her Lord—she knew how to assume the smile of complacency, and the accent of sensibility.

Forgetful of the kindness of her late patroness, she treated the infant she had left with the cruellest neglect—a neglect which was, if possible, encreased on the birth of her own daughter, as she could not bear that Augusta (instead of possessing the whole) should only share the affection and estates of her father. She contrived, by degrees, to alienate the former from the innocent Malvina ; and she trusted she should find means to deprive her of the latter.

Terrified by violence, and depressed by severity, the child looked dejected and unhappy ; and this appearance Lady Dunreath made the Earl believe proceeded from sulkiness and natural ill-humour. Her own child, unrestrained in any wish of her heart, was, from her playful gaiety, a constant source of amusement to the Earl : her mother had taken care to instruct her in all the little endearments which, when united with infantine sweetness, allure almost imperceptibly the affections.

Malvina,

Malvina, ere she knew the meaning of sorrow, thus became its prey; but, in spite of envy or ill-treatment, she grew up with all the graces of mind and form that had distinguished her mother: her air was at once elegant and commanding, her face replete with sweetness, and her fine eyes had a mixture of sensibility and languor in them which spoke to the feeling soul.

Augusta was also a fine figure, but unpossessed of the winning graces of elegance and modesty which adorned her sister: her form always appeared decorated with the most studied art, and her large eyes had a confident assurance in them, that seemed to expect and demand universal homage.

The warriors of the fort were welcome visitants at the Abbey, which Lady Dunreath contrived to render a scene of almost constant gaiety, by keeping up a continual intercourse with all the adjacent families, and entertaining all the strangers who came into its neighbourhood.

Lord Dunreath had long been a prey to infirmities, which, at this period, generally confined him to his room: but though his body was debilitated, his mind retained all its active powers.

The first appearance of the officers at the Abbey was at a ball given by Lady Dunreath, in consequence of their arrival near it. The Gothic apartments were decorated, and lighted up with a splendour that at once displayed taste and magnificence: the lights, the music, the brilliancy and unusual
gaiety

gaiety of the company, all gave to the spirits of Malvina an agreeable flutter they had never before experienced, and a brighter bloom than usual stole over her lovely cheek.

The young co-heiresses were extremely admired by the military heroes. Malvina, as the eldest, opened the ball with the Colonel: her form had attracted the eyes of Fitzalan, and vainly he attempted to withdraw them, till the lively conversation of Augusta, who honoured him with her hand, forced him to restrain his glances, and pay her the sprightly attentions so generally expected. When he came to turn Malvina, he involuntarily detained her hand for a moment: she blushed, and the timid beam that stole from her half-averted eyes agitated his whole soul.

Partners were changed in the course of the evening, and he seized the first opportunity that offered for engaging her. The softness of her voice, the simplicity yet elegance of her language, now captivated his heart, as much as her form had charmed his eyes. Never had he before seen an object he thought half so lovely or engaging; with her he could not support that lively strain of conversation he had done with her sister. Where the heart is much interested, it will not admit of trifling.

Fitzalan was now in the meridian of manhood: his stature was above the common size, and elegance and dignity were conspicuous in it; his features were regularly handsome, and the fairness of his forehead proved what his complexion had been, till change of
climate

climate and hardship had embrowned it; the expression of his countenance was somewhat plaintive; his eyes had a sweetness in them, that spoke a soul of the tenderest feelings; and the smile that played around his mouth would have adorned a face of female beauty.

When the dance with Lady Malvina was over, Lady Augusta took care, for the remainder of the evening, to engross all his attention: she thought him by far the handsomest man in the room, and gave him no opportunity of avoiding her. Gallantry obliged him to return her assiduities; and he was, by his brother-officers, set down in the list of her adorers. This mistake he encouraged—he could bear raillery on an indifferent subject; and he joined in the mirth which the idea of his laying siege to the young heiress occasioned. He deluded himself with no false hopes relative to the real object of his passion—he knew the obstacles between them were insuperable; but his heart was too proud to complain of fate: he shook off all appearance of melancholy, and seemed more animated than ever.

His visits to the Abbey became constant—Lady Augusta took them to herself, and encouraged his attentions: as her mother rendered her perfect mistress of her own actions, she had generally a levee of red-coats every morning in her drawing-room. Lady Malvina seldom appeared—she was, at those times, almost always employed in reading to her father: when that was not the case, her own favourite

yourite avocations often detained her in her room; or else she wandered out, about the romantic rocks on the sea-shore: she delighted in solitary rambles, and loved to visit the old peasants, who told her tales of her departed mother's goodness, drawing tears of sorrow from her eyes, at the irreparable loss she had sustained by her death.

Fitzalan went one morning, as usual, to the Abbey; to pay his customary visit; as he went through the gallery which led to Lady Augusta's dressing-room, his eyes were caught by two beautiful portraits of the Earl's daughters: an artist, by his express desire, had come to the Abbey to draw them; they were but just finished, and that morning placed in the gallery.

Lady Augusta appeared negligently reclined upon a sofa, in a verdant alcove; the flowing drapery of the loose robe in which she was habited set off her fine figure; little Cupids were seen fanning aside her dark-brown hair, and strewing roses on her pillow.

Lady Malvina was represented in the simple attire of a peasant girl, leaning on a little grassy hillock, whose foot was washed by a clear stream; while her flock browsed around, and her dog rested beneath the shade of an old tree, that waved its branches over her head, and seemed sheltering her from the beams of a meridian sun.

"Beautiful portrait!" cried Fitzalan, "sweet resemblance of a seraphic form!"

He heard a soft sigh behind him; he started, turned,
ed,

ed, and perceived Lady Malvina; in the utmost confusion he faltered out his admiration of the pictures, and not knowing what he did, fixed his eyes on Lady Augusta's, exclaiming, "How beautiful!"—" 'Tis very handsome indeed!" said Malvina, with a more pensive voice than usual, and led the way to her sister's drawing-room.

Lady Augusta was spangling some ribbon; but, at Fitzalan's entrance, she threw it aside, and asked him if he had been admiring her picture?—"Yes," he said, "'twas that alone had prevented his before paying his homage to the original." He proceeded in a strain of compliments, which had more gallantry than sincerity in them. In the course of their trifling, he snatched a knot of the spangled ribbon, and pinning it next his heart, declared it should remain there as a talisman against all future impressions. He stole a glance at Lady Malvina: she held a book in her hand, but her eyes were turned towards him, and a deadly paleness overspread her countenance.

Fitzalan's spirits vanished; he started up, and declared he must be gone immediately. The dejection of Lady Malvina dwelt upon his heart—it flattered its fondness, but pained its sensibility. He left the fort in the evening, immediately after he had retired from the mess: he strolled to the sea-side, and rambled a considerable way among the rocks. The scene was wild and solemn: the shadows of evening were beginning to descend, the waves stole with low murmurs upon the shore, and a soft breeze gently agitated

tated the marine plants that grew amongst the crevices of the rocks : already were the sea-fowl, with harsh and melancholy cries, flocking to their nests ; some lightly skimming over the water, while others were seen, like dark clouds, rising from the long heath on the neighbouring hills.

Fitzalan pursued his way in deep and melancholy meditation, from which a plaintive Scotch air, sung by the melting voice of harmony itself, roused him. He looked towards the spot from whence the sound proceeded, and beheld Lady Malvina standing on a low rock, a projection of it affording her support. Nothing could be more picturesque than her appearance—she looked like one of the beautiful forms which Ossian so often describes : her white dress fluttered in the wind, and her dark hair hung dishevelled around her. Fitzalan moved softly, and stopped behind her. She wept as she sung, and wiped away her tears as she ceased singing : she sighed heavily—“ Ah, my mother !” she exclaimed, “ why was Malvina left behind you ?”—“ To bless and improve mankind,” cried Fitzalan.

She screamed, and would have fallen, had he not caught her in his arms. He prevailed upon her to sit down upon the rock, and allow him to support her till her agitation had subsided. “ And why,” cried he, “ should Lady Malvina give way to melancholy, blessed as she is with all that life can render desirable ? Why seek its indulgence, by rambling about those dreary rocks—fit haunts alone,” he might

might have added, "for wretchedness and me?—Can I help wondering at your dejection," he continued, "when, to all appearance at least, I see you possessed of every thing requisite to constitute felicity?"—"Appearances are often deceitful," said Malvina, forgetting, in that moment, the caution she had hitherto inviolably observed, of never hinting at the ill treatment she received from the Countess of Dunreath and her daughter—"appearances are often deceitful," she said; "as I, alas! too fatally experience. The glare, the ostentation of wealth, a soul of sensibility would willingly resign for privacy and plainness, if they were to be attended with real friendship and sympathy."—"And how few," cried Fitzalan, turning his expressive eyes upon her face, "can know Lady Malvina, without feeling friendship for her virtues, and sympathy for her sorrows!"

As he spoke, he pressed her hand against his heart, and she felt the knot of ribbon he had snatched from her sister. She instantly withdrew her hand, and darting a haughty glance at him, "Captain Fitzalan," said she, "you were going, I believe, to Lady Augusta; let me not detain you."

Fitzalan's passions were no longer under the dominion of reason; he tore the ribbon from his breast, and flung it into the sea—"Going to Lady Augusta!" he exclaimed: "and is her lovely sister, then really deceived? Ah, Lady Malvina, I now gaze on the dear attraction that drew me to the Abbey. The feelings of a real, a hopeless passion, could

could ill support raillery or observation; I hid my passion within the recesses of my heart, and gladly allowed my visits to be placed to the account of an object truly indifferent, that I might have opportunities of seeing an object I adored."

Malvina blushed and trembled—"Fitzalan," cried she, after a pause, "I detest deceit!"—"I abhor it too; Lady Malvina," said he; "but why should I now endeavour to prove my sincerity, when I know it is so very immaterial? Excuse me for what I have already uttered; and believe that, though susceptible, I am not aspiring."

He then presented his hand to Malvina; she descended from her seat, and they walked towards the Abbey. Lady Malvina's pace was slow; and her blushes, had Fitzalan looked at her, would have expressed more pleasure than resentment. She seemed to expect a still further declaration; but Fitzalan was too confused to speak, nor indeed was it his intention again to indulge himself on the dangerous subject. They proceeded in silence; at the Abbey gate they stopped, and he wished her good-night.—"Shall we not soon see you at the Abbey?" exclaimed Lady Malvina in a flurried voice, which seemed to say, she thought his adieu rather a hasty one.—"No, my lovely friend," cried Fitzalan, pausing, while he looked upon her with the most impassioned tenderness; "in future, I shall confine myself chiefly to the fort."—"Do you dread an invasion?" asked she, smiling, while a stolen glance of her

her

her eye gave peculiar meaning to her words.—“I long dreaded that,” cried he in the same strain, “and my fears were well founded; but I must now muster all my powers to dislodge the enemy.” He kissed her hand, and precipitately retired.

Lady Malvina repaired to her chamber, in such a tumult of pleasure as she had never before experienced. She admired Fitzalan from the first evening she beheld him: though his attentions were directed to her sister, the language of his eyes to her contradicted any attachment these attentions might have intimated—his gentleness and sensibility seemed congenial to her own. Hitherto she had been the slave of tyranny and caprice, and now, for the first time, experienced that soothing tenderness her wounded feelings had so long sighed for. She was agitated and delighted; she overlooked every obstacle to her wishes, and waited impatiently a further explanation of Fitzalan’s sentiments.

Far different were his feelings from hers: to know he was beloved, could scarcely yield him pleasure, when he reflected on his hopeless situation, which forbade his availing himself of any advantage that knowledge might have afforded. Of an union, indeed, he did not dare to think, since its consequences, he knew, must be destruction; for, rigid and austere as the Earl was represented, he could not flatter himself he would ever pardon such a step; and the means of supporting Lady Malvina in any degree of comfort, he did not possess himself. He determined, as
much

much as possible, to avoid her presence ; and regretted continually having yielded to the impulse of his heart, and revealed his love, since he believed it had augmented hers. By degrees he discontinued his visits at the Abbey, but he often met Lady Malvina at parties in the neighbourhood ; caution, however, always sealed his lips, and every appearance of particularity was avoided.

The time now approached for the departure of the regiment from Scotland ; and Lady Malvina, instead of the explanation she so fondly expected, so ardently desired, saw Fitzalan studious to avoid her. The disappointment this conduct gave rise to, was too much for the tender and romantic heart of Malvina to bear, without secretly repining : society grew irksome ; she became more than ever attached to solitary rambles, which gave her opportunities of indulging her sorrows without restraint—sorrows pride often reproached her for experiencing.

It was within a week of the change of garrison, when Malvina repaired, one evening, to the rock where Fitzalan had disclosed his tenderness. A similarity of feeling led him thither : he saw his danger, but he had no power to retreat. He sat down by Malvina, and they conversed for some time on indifferent subjects. At last, after a pause of a minute, Malvina exclaimed, “ You go then, Fitzalan, never, never, I suppose, to return here again ? ”—“ It is probable I may not, indeed,” said he.—“ Then we shall never meet again ? ” cried she, while

a trickling tear stole down her lovely cheek, which, tinged as it was with a flush of agitation, looked like a half-blown rose moistened with the dews of early morning.—“Yes, my lovely friend,” said he, “we shall meet again, we shall meet in a better place—in that Heaven,” continued he, sighing, and laying his cold trembling hand upon hers, “which will recompense all our sufferings.”—“You are melancholy to-night, Fitzalan,” cried Lady Malvina, in a voice scarcely articulate.—“Oh, can you wonder at it?” exclaimed he, overcome by her emotion, and forgetting, in a moment, all his resolutions, “oh, can you wonder at my melancholy, when I know not but that this is the last time I shall see the only woman I ever loved, when I know that, in bidding her adieu, I resign all the pleasure, the happiness of my life?”

Malvina could no longer restrain her feelings—she sunk upon his shoulder, and wept. “Good Heavens!” cried Fitzalan, almost trembling beneath the lovely burthen he supported, “what a cruel situation is mine! But, Malvina, I will not, cannot plunge you in destruction: led by necessity, as well as choice, to embrace the profession of a soldier, I have no income but what is derived from that profession: though my own distresses I could bear with fortitude, yours would totally unman me; nor would my honour be less injured than my peace, were you involved in difficulties on my account. Our separation is therefore, alas! inevitable.”—“Oh no!” exclaimed

exclaimed Malvina ; “ the difficulties you have mentioned will vanish. My father’s affections were early alienated from me, and my fate is of little consequence to him—nay, I have reason to believe he will be glad of an excuse for leaving his large possessions to Augusta ; and oh, how little shall I envy her those possessions, if the happy destiny I now look forward to is mine !”

As she spoke, her mild eyes rested on the face of Fitzalan, who clasped her to his bosom, in a sudden transport of tenderness. “ But, though my father is partial to Augusta,” she continued, “ I am sure he will not be unnatural to me ; and though he may withhold affluence, he will, I am confident, allow me a competence—nay, Lady Dunreath, I believe, in pleasure at my removal from the Abbey, would, if he hesitated in that respect, become my intercessor.” The energy with which Malvina spoke convinced Fitzalan of the strength of her affection : an ecstasy, never before felt, pervaded his soul, at the idea of being so beloved. Vainly did prudence whisper, that Malvina might be deluding herself with false hopes—the suggestions of love triumphed over every consideration ; and again folding the fair being he held in his arms to his heart, he softly asked, would she, at all events, unite her destiny with his ?

Lady Malvina, who firmly believed what she had said to him would really happen, and who deemed a separation from him the greatest misfortune which

could possibly befall her, blushed, and, faltering, yielded a willing consent.

The means of accomplishing their wishes now occupied their thoughts. Fitzalan's imagination was too fertile not soon to suggest a scheme, which had a probability of success; he resolved to entrust the chaplain of the regiment with the affair, and request his attendance, the ensuing night, in the chapel of the Abbey, where Lady Malvina promised to meet them with her maid, on whose secrecy she thought she could rely. It was settled that Fitzalan should pay a visit the next morning at the Abbey, and give Malvina a certain sign, if he succeeded with the chaplain.

The increasing darkness at length reminded them of the lateness of the hour. Fitzalan conducted Malvina to the Abbey gate, where they separated, each involved in a tumult of hopes, fears, and wishes.

The next morning Lady Malvina brought her work into her sister's dressing-room. At last Fitzalan entered: he was attacked by Augusta for his long absence, which he excused by pleading regimental business. After some time trifling with her, he prevailed on her to sit down to the harpsichord; and then, glancing at Malvina, he gave her the promised signal.

Her conscious eyes were instantly bent to the ground, a crimson glow was suddenly succeeded by a deadly paleness, her head sunk upon her bosom,
and

and her agitation must have excited suspicions, had it been perceived ; but Fitzalan purposely bent over her sister, and thus gave her an opportunity of retiring, unnoticed, from the room. As soon as she had regained a little composure, she called her maid, and after receiving many promises of secrecy, unfolded to her the whole affair.—It was long past the midnight hour ere Malvina would attempt repairing to the chapel : when she at last rose for that purpose, she trembled universally—a kind of horror chilled her heart ; she began to fear she was about doing wrong, and hesitated : but when she reflected on the noble generosity of Fitzalan, and that she herself had precipitated him into the measure they were about taking, her hesitation was over ; and leaning on her maid, she stole through the winding galleries, and lightly descending the stairs, entered the long hall, which terminated in a dark arched passage, that opened into the chapel. This was a wild and gloomy structure, retaining every where vestiges of that monkish superstition which had erected it : beneath were the vaults which contained the ancestors of the Earl of Dunreath, whose deeds and titles were enumerated on Gothic monuments, their dust-covered banners waving around in sullen dignity to the rude gale, which found admittance through the broken windows. The light which the maid held produced deep shadows, that heightened the solemnity of the place.

“ They are not here,” said Malvina, casting her

fearful eyes around. She went to the door, which opened into a thick wood ; but here she only heard the breeze rustling amongst the trees : she turned from it, and sinking upon the steps of the altar, gave way to an agony of tears and lamentations. A low murmur reached her ear ; she started up. The chapel-door was gently pushed open, and Fitzalan entered with the chaplain : they had been watching in the wood for the appearance of light. Malvina was supported to the altar, and a few minutes made her the wife of Fitzalan.

She had not the courage, till within a day or two previous to the regiment's departure from Scotland, to acquaint the Earl with her marriage : the Countess already knew it, through the means of Malvina's woman, who was a creature of her own. Lady Dunreath exulted at the prospect of Malvina's ruin—it at once gratified the malevolence of her soul, and the avaricious desire she had of increasing her own daughter's fortune. She had, besides, another reason to rejoice at it ; this was, the attachment Lady Augusta had formed for Fitzalan, which, her mother feared, would have precipitated her into a step as imprudent as her sister's, had she not been beforehand with her.

This fear the impetuous passions of Lady Augusta naturally excited. She really loved Fitzalan ; a degree of frantic rage possessed her at his marriage : she cursed her sister in the bitterness of her heart, and joined with Lady Dunreath in working up the Earl's

Earl's naturally austere and violent passions into such a paroxysm of fury and resentment, that he at last solemnly refused forgiveness to Malvina, and bade her never more appear in his presence.

She now began to tread the thorny path of life ; and though her guide was tender and affectionate, nothing could allay her anguish for having involved him in difficulties, which his noble spirit could ill brook, or struggle against. The first year of their union she had a son, who was called, after her father, Oscar Dunreath. The four years that succeeded his birth were passed in wretchedness that baffles description. At the expiration of this period, their debts were so increased, Fitzalan was compelled to sell out on half-pay. Lady Malvina now expected an addition to her family ; her situation, she hoped, would move her father's heart ; and resolved to essay every thing which afforded the smallest prospect of obtaining comfort for her husband and his babes ; she prevailed on him, therefore, to carry her to Scotland.

They lodged at a peasant's in the neighbourhood of the Abbey : he informed them, the Earl's infirmities were daily increasing, and that Lady Dunreath had just celebrated her daughter's marriage with the Marquis of Rosline. This nobleman had passionately admired Lady Malvina—an admiration the Countess always wished transferred to her daughter. On the marriage of Malvina, he went abroad ; his passion was conquered ere he returned to Scotland, and he

disdained not the overtures made for his alliance from the Abbey : his favourite propensities, avarice and pride, were indeed gratified by the possession of the Earl of Dunreath's sole heiress.

The day after her arrival, Lady Malvina sent little Oscar, with the old peasant, to the Abbey : Oscar was a perfect cherubim—

The bloom of opening flowers, unsullied beauty,
Softness, and sweetest innocence he wore ;
And look'd like Nature in the world's first spring.

Lady Malvina gave him a letter for the Earl, in which, after pathetically describing her situation, she besought him to let the uplifted hands of innocence plead her cause.—The peasant watched till the hour came for Lady Dunreath to go out in her carriage, as was her daily custom ; he then desired to be conducted to the Earl, and was accordingly ushered into his presence. He found him alone, and briefly informed him of his errand. The Earl frowned, and looked agitated ; but did not by any means express that displeasure which the peasant had expected—feeling for himself, indeed ; had lately softened his heart : he was unhappy—his wife and daughter had attained the completion of their wishes, and no longer paid him the attention his age required. He refused, however, to accept the letter :

Little Oscar, who had been gazing on him from the moment he entered the apartment, now ran forward. Gently stroking his hand, he smiled in his face, and exclaimed, “ Ah, pray do take poor mam-
ma's

ma's letter!" The Earl involuntarily took it: as he read, the muscles of his face began to work, and a tear dropped from him. "Poor mamma cries too," said Oscar, upon whose hand the tear fell.—"Why did your mamma send you to me?" said the Earl.—"Because she said," cried Oscar, "that you were my grandpapa: and she bids me love you, and teaches me every day to pray for you."—"Heaven bless you, my lovely prattler!" exclaimed the Earl, with sudden emotion, patting his head as he spoke.

At this moment Lady Dunreath rushed into the apartment: one of her favourites had followed her, to relate the scene that was going forward within it; and she had returned with all possible expedition, to counteract any dangerous impressions that might be made upon the Earl's mind. Rage inflamed her countenance: the Earl knew the violence of her temper; he was unequal to contention, and hastily motioned for the peasant to retire with the child. The account of his reception excited the most flattering hopes in the bosom of his mother: she counted the tedious hours, in expectation of a kind summons to the Abbey, but no such summons came. The next morning the child was sent to it, but the porter refused him admittance, by the express command of the Earl, he said. Frightened at his rudeness, the child returned weeping to his mother, whose blasted expectations wrung her heart with agony, and tears and lamentations broke from her. The evening was far advanced, when suddenly her features brightened,

"I will go," cried she, starting up, "I will again try to melt his obduracy. Oh, with what lowliness should a child bend before an offended parent! Oh, with what fortitude, what patience, should a wife, a mother, try to overcome difficulties which she is conscious of having precipitated the objects of her tenderest affections into!"

The night was dark and tempestuous: she would not suffer Fitzalan to attend her, but proceeded to the Abbey, leaning on the peasant's arm. She would not be repulsed at the door, but forced her way into the hall. Here Lady Dunreath met her, and, with mingled pride and cruelty, refused her access to her father, declaring it was by his desire she did so.—"Let me see him but for a moment," said the lovely suppliant, clasping her white and emaciated hands together; "by all that is tender in humanity, I beseech you to grant my request!"—"Turn this frantic woman from the Abbey!" said the implacable Lady Dunreath, trembling with passion; "at your peril suffer her to continue here! The peace of your Lord is too precious to be disturbed by her exclamations!"

The imperious order was instantly obeyed, though, as Cordelia says, "it was a night when one would not have turned an enemy's dog from the door:" the rain poured in torrents, the sea roared with awful violence, and the wind raged through the wood, as if it would tear up the trees by the roots. The peasant charitably flung his plaid over Malvina: she moved

moved mechanically along—her senses appeared quite stupified. Fitzalan watched for her at the door: she rushed into his extended arms, and fainted: it was long ere she shewed any symptoms of returning life. Fitzalan wept over her, in the anguish and distraction of his soul; and scarcely could he forbear execrating the being who had so grievously afflicted her gentle spirit. By degrees she revived; and as she pressed him feebly to her breast, exclaimed, “The final stroke is given—I have been turned from my father’s door!”

The cottage in which they lodged afforded but few of the necessaries, and none of the comforts of life; such, at least, as they had been accustomed to. In Malvina’s present situation, Fitzalan dreaded the loss of her life, should they continue in their present abode; but whither could he take her, wanderer as he was upon the face of the earth? At length the faithful Edwin occurred to his recollection; his house, he was confident, would afford them a comfortable asylum, where Lady Malvina would experience all that tenderness and care her situation demanded. He immediately set about procuring a conveyance, and the following morning Malvina bade a last adieu to Scotland.

Lady Dunreath, in the meantime, suffered torture. After she had seen Malvina turned from the Abbey, she returned to her apartment; it was furnished with the most luxurious elegance, yet she could not rest within it: conscience already told her, if Malvina

died, she must consider herself her murderer—her pale and woe-worn image seemed still before her. A cold terror oppressed her heart, which the horrors of the night augmented: the tempest shook the battlements of the Abbey; and the wind, which howled through the galleries, seemed like the last moans of some wandering spirit of the pile, bewailing the fate of one of its fairest daughters. To cruelty and ingratitude Lady Dunreath had added deceit: her Lord was yielding to the solicitations of his child, when she counteracted his intentions by a tale of falsehood. The visions of the night were also dreadful: Malvina appeared expiring before her, and the late Lady Dunreath by her bedside, reproaching her barbarity. “Oh cruel!” the ghastly figure seemed to say, “is it you whom I fostered in my bosom, that have done this deed—driven forth my child, a forlorn and wretched wanderer?”

Oh conscience! how awful are thy terrors! Thou art the viceroy of Heaven, and dost anticipate its vengeance, ere the final hour of retribution arrives. Guilt may be triumphant, but never, never can be happy; it finds no shield against thy stings and arrows. The heart thou smitest bleeds in every pore, and sighs amidst gaiety and splendour.

The unfortunate travellers were welcomed with the truest hospitality by the grateful Edwiñ. He had married, soon after his return from America, a young girl, to whom, from his earliest youth, he was attached: his parents died soon after his union, and the

the whole of their patrimony devolved to him. Soothed and attended with the utmost tenderness and respect, Fitzalan hoped Lady Malvina would here regain her health and peace: he intended, after her recovery, to endeavour to be put on full pay; and he trusted he should prevail on her to continue at the farm. At length the hour came in which she gave a daughter to his arms. From the beginning of her illness, the people about her were alarmed: too soon was it proved their alarms were well founded—she lived, after the birth of her infant, but a few minutes, and died embracing her husband, and blessing his children:

Fitzalan's feelings cannot well be described: they were at first too much for reason; and he continued some time in a state of perfect stupefaction. When he regained his sensibility, his grief was not outrageous; it was that deep, still sorrow, which fastens on the heart, and cannot vent itself in tears or lamentations. He sat with calmness by the bed where the beautiful remains of Malvina lay; he gazed, without shrinking, on her pale face, which death, as if in pity to his feelings, had not disfigured; he kissed her cold lips, continually exclaiming, "Oh, had we never met, she might still have been living!" His language was something like that of a poet of her own country—

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower,

I meet thee in a luckless hour."

It was when he saw them about removing her, that
all

all the tempest of his grief broke forth. Oh, how impossible to describe the anguish of the poor widower's heart, when he returned from seeing his Malvina laid in her last receptacle! He shut himself up in the room where she had expired, and ordered no one to approach him: he threw himself upon the bed, he laid his cheek upon her pillow, he grasped it to his bosom, he wetted it with tears, because she had breathed upon it. Oh, how still, how dreary, how desolate did all appear around him! "And shall this desolation never more be enlivened," he exclaimed, "by the soft music of Malvina's voice? Shall these eyes never more be cheered by beholding her angelic face?"

Exhausted by his feelings, he sunk into a slumber; he dreamed of Malvina, and thought she lay beside him; he awoke with sudden ecstasy, and under the strong impression of the dream, stretched out his arms to enfold her. Alas! all was empty, void.—He started up; he groaned, in the bitterness of his soul; he traversed the room with a distracted pace; he sat him down in the little window, from whence he could view the spire of the church (now glistening in the moonbeams) by which she was interred.—"Deep, still, and profound," cried he, "is now the sleep of my Malvina—the voice of Love cannot awake her from it; nor does she now dream of her midnight mourner."

The cold breeze of night blew upon his forehead; but he heeded it not—his whole soul was full of Mal-

vina,

vina, whom torturing fancy presented to his view in the habiliments of the grave. "And is this emaciated form, this pale face," he exclaimed, as if he had really seen her, "all that remain of elegance and beauty once unequalled!"

A native sense of religion alone checked the transports of his grief: that sweet, that sacred Power, which pours balm upon the wounds of sorrow, and saves its children from despair—that Power whispered to his heart, a patient submission to the will of Heaven was the surest means he could attain of again rejoining his Malvina.

She was interred in the village churchyard; at the head of her grave a stone was placed, on which was rudely cut,

MALVINA FITZALAN,

ALIKE LOVELY AND UNFORTUNATE.

Fitzalan would not permit her empty title to be on it. "She is buried," he said, "as the wife of a wretched soldier, not as the daughter of a wealthy Peer."

She had requested her infant might be called after her own mother; her request was sacred to Fitzalan, and it was baptized by the united names of Amanda Malvina. Mrs. Edwin was then nursing her first girl; but she sent it out, and took the infant of Fitzalan, in its place, to her bosom.

The money which Fitzalan had procured by disposing of his commission, was now nearly exhausted; but

But his mind was too enervated to allow him to think of any project for future support.—Lady Malvina was deceased two months, when a nobleman came into the neighbourhood, with whom Fitzalan had once been intimately acquainted. The acquaintance was now renewed; and Fitzalan's appearance, with the little history of his misfortunes, so much affected and interested his friend, that, without solicitation, he procured him a company in a regiment then stationed in England. Thus did Fitzalan again enter into active life; but his spirits were broken, and his constitution injured. Four years he continued in the army; when, pining to have his children (all that now remained of the woman he adored) under his own care, he obtained, through the interest of his friend, leave to sell out. Oscar was then eight, and Amanda four. The delighted father, as he held them to his heart, wept over them tears of mingled pain and pleasure.

He had seen in Devonshire, where he was quartered for some time, a little romantic solitude, quite adapted to his taste and finances. He proposed for it, and soon became its proprietor. Hither he carried his children, much against the inclination of the Edwins, who loved them as their own. Two excellent schools in the neighbourhood gave them the usual advantages of genteel education; but as they were only day-scholars, the improvement, or rather forming of their morals, was the pleasing task of their father. To his assiduous care, too, they were indebted for
the.

the rapid progress they made in their studies, and for the graceful simplicity of their manners. They rewarded his care, and grew up as amiable and lovely as his fondest wishes could desire.

As Oscar advanced in life, his father began to experience new cares; for he had not the power of putting him in the way of making any provision for himself. A military life was what Oscar appeared anxious for—he had early conceived a predilection for it, from hearing his father speak of the services he had seen: but though he possessed quite the spirit of a hero, he had the truest tenderness, the most engaging softness of disposition; his temper was indeed at once mild, artless, and affectionate. He was about eighteen when the proprietor of the estate on which his father held his farm died; and his heir, a Colonel in the army, immediately came down from London to take formal possession. He soon became acquainted with Fitzalan, who, in the course of conversation one day, expressed the anxiety he suffered on his son's account. The Colonel said he was a fine youth, and it was a pity he was not provided for. He left Devonshire, however, shortly after this, without appearing in the least interested about him.

Fitzalan's heart was oppressed with anxiety: he could not purchase for his son, without depriving himself of support. With the nobleman who had formerly served him so essentially, he had kept up no intercourse since he quitted the army; but he frequently

frequently heard of him, and was told he had become quite a man of the world, which was an implication of his having lost all feeling: an application to him, therefore, he feared would be unavailing, and he felt too proud to subject himself to a repulse.

From this disquietude he was unexpectedly relieved by a letter from the Earl of Cherbury, his yet kind friend, informing him he had procured an ensigncy for Oscar in Colonel Belgrave's regiment, which he considered a very fortunate circumstance, as the Colonel, he was confident, from personally knowing the young gentleman, would render him every service in his power. The Earl chid Fitzalan for never having kept up a correspondence with him, assured him he had never forgotten the friendship of their earlier years, and that he gladly seized the first opportunity which offered of serving him in the person of his son, which opportunity he was indebted to Colonel Belgrave for.

Fitzalan's soul was filled with gratitude and rapture: he immediately wrote to the Earl and the Colonel, in terms expressive of his feelings. Colonel Belgrave received his thanks, as if he had really deserved them; but this was not by any means the case: he was a man devoid of sensibility, and had never once thought of serving Fitzalan or his son—his mentioning them was merely accidental.

In a large company, of which the Earl of Cherbury was one, the discourse happened to turn on the Dunreath family, and by degrees led to Fitzalan, who

who was severely blamed and pitied for his connexion with it: the subject was, in the opinion of Colonel Belgrave, so *à-propos*, he could not forbear describing his present situation, and inquietude about his son, who, he said, he fancied must, like a second Cincinnatus, take the ploughshare instead of the sword.

Lord Cherbury lost no part of his discourse: though immersed in politics and other intricate concerns, he yet retained, and was ready to obey, the dictates of humanity, particularly when they did not interfere with his own interests: he therefore directly conceived the design of serving his old friend.

Oscar soon quitted Devonshire after his appointment, and brought a letter from his father to the Colonel, in which he was strongly recommended to his protection, as one unskilled in the ways of men. And now all Fitzalan's care devolved upon Amanda; and most amply did she recompense it: to the improvement of her genius, the cultivation of her talents, the promotion of her father's happiness seemed her first incentive; without him no amusement was enjoyed, without him no study entered upon—he was her friend, guardian, and protector; and no language can express, no heart (except a paternal one) conceive the rapture he felt, at seeing a creature grow under

———“ his forming hand,

So fair,

That what seem'd fair in all the world, seem'd now
Mean, or in her contain'd.”

Some

Some years had elapsed since Oscar's departure, ere Colonel Belgrave returned into their neighbourhood: he came soon after his nuptials had been celebrated in Ireland with a lady of that country, whom Oscar's letters described as possessing every mental and personal charm which could please or captivate the heart. Colonel Belgrave came, unaccompanied by his fair bride. Fitzalan, who believed him his benefactor, and consequently regarded him as a friend (still thinking it was through his means Lord Cherbury had served him), immediately waited upon him, and invited him to his house. The invitation, after some time, was accepted; but, had he imagined what an attraction the house contained, he would not have long hesitated about entering it: he was a man, indeed, of the most depraved principles; and an object he admired, no tie or situation, however sacred, could guard from his pursuit.

Amanda was too much a child, when he was last in the country, to attract his observation; he had therefore no idea that the blossom he then so carelessly overlooked, had since expanded into such beauty. How great, then, was his rapture and surprise, when Fitzalan led into the room where he had received him, a tall, elegantly-formed girl, whose rosy cheeks were dimpled with the softest smile of complacency, and whose fine blue eyes beamed with modesty and gratitude upon him! He instantly marked her for his prey; and blessed his lucky stars, which had inspired Fitzalan with the idea of his being his benefactor.

benefactor, since that would give him an easier access to the house than he could otherwise have hoped for.

From this time he became almost an inmate of it, except when he chose to contrive little parties at his own for Amanda. He took every opportunity that offered, without observation, to try to ingratiate himself into her favour : those opportunities the unsuspecting temper of Fitzalan allowed to be frequent—he would as soon have trusted Amanda to the care of Belgrave, as to that of her brother ; and never, therefore, prevented her walking out with him, when he desired it, or receiving him in the morning, while he himself was absent about the affairs of his farm—delighted to think the conversation or talents of his daughter (for Amanda frequently sung and played for the Colonel) could contribute to the amusement of his friend. Amanda innocently increased his flame, by the attention she paid, which she considered but a just tribute of gratitude for his services : she delighted in talking to him of her dear Oscar, and often mentioned his Lady ; but was surprised to find he always waved the latter subject.

Belgrave could not long restrain the impetuosity of his passions : the situation of Fitzalan (which he knew to be a distressed one) would, he fancied, forward his designs on his daughter ; and what those designs were, he, by degrees, in a retired walk one day, unfolded to Amanda. At first she did not perfectly understand him ; but when, with increased audacity, he explained himself more fully, horror, indignation,

indignation, and surprise, took possession of her breast; and yie'ding to their feelings, she turned and fled to the house, as if from a monster. Belgrave was provoked and mortified; the softness of her manners had tempted him to believe he was not indifferent to her, and that she would prove an easy conquest.

Poor Amanda would not appear in the presence of her father, till she had, in some degree, regained composure, as she feared the smallest intimation of the affair might occasion fatal consequences. As she sat with him, a letter was brought her: she could not think Belgrave would have the effrontery to write, and opened it, supposing it came from some acquaintance in the neighbourhood. How great was the shock she sustained, on finding it from him! Having thrown off the mask, he determined no longer to assume any disguise. Her paleness and confusion alarmed her father, and he instantly demanded the cause of her agitation. She found longer concealment was impossible; and throwing herself at her father's feet, besought him, as she put the letter into his hands, to restrain his passion. When he perused it, he raised her up, and commanded her, as she valued his love or happiness, to inform him of every particular relative to the insult she had received. She obeyed, though terrified to behold her father trembling with emotion. When she concluded, he tenderly embraced her; and bidding her confine herself to the house, rose, and took down his hat. It was
easy

easy to guess whither he was going: her terror increased; and in a voice scarcely articulate, she besought him not to risk his safety. He commanded her silence, with a sternness never before assumed. His manner awed her; but when she saw him leaving the room, her feelings could no longer be controlled—she rushed after him, and flinging her arms round his neck, fainted on it. In this situation the unhappy father was compelled to leave her to the care of a maid, lest her pathetic remonstrances should delay the vengeance he resolved to take on a wretch who had meditated a deed of such atrocity against his peace; but Belgrave was not to be found.

Scarcely, however, had Fitzalan returned to his half-distracted daughter, ere a letter was brought him from the wretch, in which he made the most degrading proposals; and bade Fitzalan beware how he answered them, as his situation had put him entirely into his power. This was a fatal truth: Fitzalan had been tempted to make a large addition to his farm, from an idea of turning the little money he possessed to advantage: but he was more ignorant of agriculture than he had imagined; and this ignorance, joined to his own integrity of heart, rendered him the dupe of some designing wretches in his neighbourhood: his whole stock dwindled away in unprofitable experiments, and he was now considerably in arrears with Belgrave. The ungenerous advantage he strove to take of his situation, increased, if possible,

possible, his indignation; and again he sought him, but still without success.

Belgrave soon found no temptation of prosperity would prevail on the father or daughter to accede to his wishes; he therefore resolved to try whether the pressure of adversity would render them more complying, and left the country, having first ordered his steward to proceed directly against Fitzalan.

The consequence of this order was, an immediate execution on his effects; and but for the assistance of a good-natured farmer, he would have been arrested. By his means, and under favour of night, he and Amanda set out for London: they arrived there in safety, and retired to obscure lodgings. In this hour of distress, Fitzalan conquered all false pride, and wrote to Lord Cherbury, entreating him to procure him some employment, which might relieve him from his present distressing situation. He cautiously concealed every thing relative to Belgrave—he could not bear that it should be known he had ever been degraded by his infamous proposals. Oscar's safety too, he knew, depended on his secrecy, as he was well convinced no idea of danger, or elevation of rank, would secure the wretch from his fury, who had meditated so great an injury against his sister.

He had the mortification of having the letter he sent to Lord Cherbury returned, as his Lordship was then absent from town; nor was he expected for

some

some months, having gone on an excursion of pleasure to France. Some of these months had lingered away in all the horrors of anxiety and distress, when Fitzalan formed the resolution of sending Amanda into Wales, whose health had considerably suffered, from the complicated uneasiness and terror she experienced on her own and her father's account.

Belgrave had traced the fugitives; and though Fitzalan was guarded against all the stratagems he used to have him arrested, he found means to have letters conveyed to Amanda, full of base solicitations and insolent declarations, that the rigour he treated her father with was quite against his feelings, and should instantly be withdrawn, if he acceded to the proposals he made for her.

But though Fitzalan had determined to send Amanda into Wales, with whom could he trust his heart's best treasure? At last the son of the worthy farmer who had assisted him in his journey to London, occurred to his remembrance: he came often to town, and always called upon Fitzalan. The young man, the moment it was proposed, expressed the greatest readiness to attend Miss Fitzalan. As every precaution was necessary, her father made her take the name of Dunford, and travel in the mail-coach, for the greater security. He divided the contents of his purse with her; and recommending this lovely and most beloved child to the protection of Heaven, saw her depart, with mingled pain and pleasure; promising to give her the earliest intelligence of Lord Cher-

bury's arrival in town, which, he supposed, would fix his future destiny. Previous to her departure, he wrote to the Edwins, informing them of her intended visit, and also her change of name for the present. This latter circumstance, which was not satisfactorily accounted for, excited their warmest curiosity; and not thinking it proper to ask Amanda to gratify it, they, to use their own words, sifted her companion, who hesitated not to inform them of the indignities she had suffered from Colonel Belgrave, which were well known in his neighbourhood.

CHAP. III.

———Thy grave shall with fresh flowers be dress'd,
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast;
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of the year shall blow. POPE.

A GENTLE noise in her chamber roused Amanda from a light refreshing slumber, and she beheld her nurse standing by her bedside, with a bowl of goat's whey. Amanda took the salubrious draught with a smile, and instantly starting up, was dressed in a few minutes. She felt more composed than she had done for some time past; the transition from a narrow, dark street to a fine open country, would have excited a lively transport in her mind, but for the idea of

of her father still remaining in the gloomy situation she had quitted.

On going out, she found the family all busily employed : Edwin and his sons were mowing in a meadow near the house, the nurse was churning, Ellen washing the milk-pails by the stream in the valley, and Betsey turning a cake for her breakfast. The tea-table was laid by a window, round which a woodbine crept, diffusing a delightful fragrance through the room ; the bees feasted on its sweetness, and the gaudy butterflies fluttered around it ; the refulgent sun gladdened the face of Nature ; the morning breeze tempered its heat, and bore upon its dewy wings the sweets of opening flowers ; birds carolled their matins almost on every spray ; and scattered peasants, busied in their various labours, enlivened the extensive prospect.

Amanda was delighted with all she saw, and wrote to her father, that his presence was only wanting to complete her pleasure. The young man who had attended her, on receiving her letter, set out for the village, from whence he was to return in a stage-coach to London.

The morning was passed by Amanda in arranging her little affairs, walking about the cottage, and conversing with the nurse relative to past times and present avocations. When the hour for dinner came, by her desire it was carried out into the recess in the garden, where the balmy air, the lovely scene which surrounded her, rendered it doubly delicious.

In the evening she asked Ellen to take a walk with her, to which she joyfully consented. "And pray, Miss," said Ellen, after she had smartened herself with a clean white apron, her Sunday cap, and a hat loaded with poppy-coloured ribbons, smiling as she spoke, at the pretty image her glass reflected, "where shall we go?"—"To the churchyard," replied Amanda.—"Oh Lord, Miss!" cried Ellen, "won't that be rather a dismal place to go to?"—"Indulge me, my dear Ellen," said Amanda, "in shewing me the way thither—there is one spot in it my heart wants to visit."

The churchyard lay at the entrance of the little village: the church was a small structure, whose Gothic appearance proclaimed its ancient date; it was rendered more venerable by the lofty elms and yews which surrounded it, apparently coeval with itself, and which cast dark shades upon the spots where the "rude forefathers of the hamlet slept," which,

"With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implor'd the passing tribute of a sigh."

And it was a tribute Amanda paid, as she proceeded to the grave of Lady Malvina, which Ellen pointed out; it was overgrown with grass, and the flag, which bore her name, green, from time and damp. Amanda involuntarily sunk on her knees, and kissed the hallowed earth; her eyes caught the melancholy inscription—"Sweet spirit," she said, "Heaven now rewards your sufferings. Oh my mother! if departed
spirits

spirits are ever allowed to review this world, with love ineffable you may now be regarding your child. Oh, if she is doomed to tread a path as thorny as the one you trod, may the same sweetness and patience that distinguished you, support her through it! with the same pious awe, the same meek submission, may she bow to the designations of her Creator!"

The affecting apostrophe drew tears from the tender-hearted Ellen, who besought her not to continue longer in such a dismal place. Amanda now arose weeping—her spirits were entirely overcome: the busy objects of day had amused her mind, and prevented it from meditating on its sorrows; but, in the calm solitude of the evening, they gradually revived in her remembrance. Her father's ill health, she feared, would increase, for want of her tender attentions; and when she thought of his distress, his confinement, his dejection, she felt agony at their separation.

Her melancholy was noticed at the cottage. Ellen informed the nurse of the dismal walk they had taken, which at once accounted for it: and the good woman exerted herself to enliven her dear child; but Amanda, though she faintly smiled, was not to be cheered, and soon retired to bed, pale, languid, and unhappy.

Returning light, in some degree, dispelled her melancholy: she felt, however, for the first time, that her hours would hang heavy on her hands, deprived as she was of those delightful resources which had

hitherto diversified them. To pass her time in listless inaction or idle saunters about the house, was insupportable; and besides, she found her presence in the morning was a restraint on her humble friends, who did not deem it good manners to work before her; and to them, who, like the bees, were obliged to lay up their wintry hoard in summer, the loss of time was irreparable.

In the distraction of her father's affairs, she had lost her books, implements for drawing, and musical instruments; and in the cottage she could only find a Bible, family prayer-book, and a torn volume of old ballads.

"Tear heart, now I think on't," said the nurse, "you may go to the library at Tudor Hall, where there are books enough to keep you a-going, if you lived to the age of Methusalem himself; and very pretty reading to be sure amongst them, or our Parson Howell would not have been going there as often as he did to study, till he got a library of his own. The family are all away; and as the door is open every fine day to air the room, you will not be noticed by nopoty going into it; though, for that matter, poor old Mrs. Abergwilly would make you welcome enough, if you promised to take none of the books away with you. But as I know you to be a little bashful or so, I will, if you choose, step over, and ask her leave for you to go."—"If you please," said Amanda: "I should not like to go without it."—"Well, I shan't be long," continued the nurse,
"and

“and Ellen shall shew you the way to-day ; it will be a pretty pit of a walk for you to take every morning.”

The nurse was as good as her word ; she returned soon, with Mrs. Abergwilly’s permission for Amanda to read in the library whenever she pleased. In consequence of this, she immediately proceeded to the Hall, whose white turrets were seen from the cottage : it was a large and antique building, embosomed in a grove ; the library was on the ground-floor, and entered by a spacious folding-door. As soon as she had reached it, Ellen left her, and returned to the cottage ; and Amanda began with pleasure to examine the apartment, whose elegance and simplicity struck her with immediate admiration.

On one side was a row of large windows, arched quite in the Gothic style ; opposite to them were corresponding arches, in whose recesses the book-cases were placed ; round these arches were festoons of laurel, elegantly executed in stucco-work ; and above them medallions of some of the most celebrated poets : the chimney-piece, of the finest Italian marble, was beautifully inlaid and ornamented ; the paintings on the ceiling were all highly finished, and of the allegorical kind ; and it was difficult to determine whether the taste that designed, or the hand that executed them, merited most praise : upon marble pedestals stood a celestial and terrestrial globe, and one recess was entirely hung with maps. It was a room, from its situation and appearance, peculiarly

adapted for study and contemplation ; all around was solitude and silence, save the rustling of the trees, whose dark foliage cast a solemn shade upon the windows.

Opposite the entrance was another folding-door, which being a little opened, Amanda could not resist the desire she felt of seeing what was beyond it. She entered a large vaulted apartment, whose airy lightness formed a pleasing contrast to the gloomy one she had left. The manner in which it was fitted up, and the musical instruments, declared this to be a music-room. It was hung with pale green damask, spotted with silver, and bordered with festoons of roses, intermingled with light silver sprays ; the seats corresponded to the hangings ; the tables were of fine inlaid wood ; and superb lustres were suspended from the ceiling, which represented, in a masterly style, scenes from some of the eminent poets ; the orchestra, about the centre of the room, was enclosed with a light balustrading of white marble, elevated by a few steps.

The windows of this room commanded a pleasing prospect of a deep romantic dale ; the hills, through which it wound, displaying a beautiful diversity of woody scenery, interspersed with green pastures and barren points of rock ; a fine fall of water fell from one of the highest of the hills, which, broken by intervening roots and branches of trees, ran a hundred different ways, sparkling in the sunbeams as they emerged from the shade.

Amanda

Amanda stood long at a window enjoying this delightful prospect, and admiring the taste which had chosen this room for amusement—thus at once gratifying the eye and ear. On looking over the instruments, she saw a piano-forte unlocked; she gently raised the lid, and, touching the keys, found them in tolerable order. Amanda adored music—her genius for it was great, and had received every advantage her father could possibly give it: in cultivating it, he had laid up a fund of delight for himself; for “his soul was a stream that flowed at pleasant sounds.”

Amanda could not resist the present opportunity of gratifying her favourite inclination. “Harmony and I,” cried she, “have long been strangers to each other.” She sat down, and played a little tender air—those her father loved recurred to her recollection; and she played a few of them with even more than usual elegance. “Ah, dear and valued object!” she mournfully sighed, “why are you not here to share my pleasure?” She wiped away a starting tear of tender remembrance, and began a little simple air.

Ah, gentle Hope! shall I no more

Thy cheerful influence share?

Oh! must I still thy loss deplore,

And be the slave of care?

The gloom which now obscures my days,

At thy approach would fly;

And glowing fancy should display

A bright unclouded sky.

Night's dreary shadows fleet away
Before the orient beam ;
So sorrow melts before thy sway,
Thou nymph of cheerful mien !
Ah ! seek again my lonely breast,
Dislodge each painful fear ;
Be once again my heavenly guest,
And stay each falling tear.

Amanda saw a number of music-books lying about : she examined a few, and found they contained compositions of some of the most eminent masters—they tempted her to continue a little longer at the instrument. When she rose from it, she returned to the library, and began looking over the books, which she found were a collection of the best that past or present times had produced. She soon selected one for perusal, and seated herself in the recess of a window, that she might enjoy the cool breeze which sighed amongst the trees. Here, delighted with her employment, she forgot the progress of time, nor thought of moving, till Ellen appeared with a request from the nurse for her immediate return, as her dinner was ready, and she was uneasy at her fasting so long.

Amanda did not hesitate to comply with the request ; but she resolved henceforth to be a constant visitor to the Hall, which contained such pleasing sources of amusement ; she also settled, in her own mind, often to ramble amidst its shades, which were perfectly adapted to her taste. These resolutions she put in practice ; and a week passed in this manner, during

during which she heard from her father, who informed her that, suspecting the woman with whom he lodged to be in Colonel Belgrave's interest, he proposed changing his abode : he desired her, therefore, not to write till she heard from him again ; and added, Lord Cherbury was daily expected.

CHAP. IV.

Mine eyes were half closed in sleep : soft music came to mine ear ; it was like the rising breeze, that whirls, at first, the thistle's beard, that flies dark, shadowy, over the grass. OSSIAN.

AMANDA went every morning to the Hall, where she alternately played and read. In the evening she again returned to it ; but, instead of staying in the library, generally took a book from thence, and read at the foot of some old moss-covered tree ; delighted to hear its branches gently rustling over her head, and myriads of summer flies buzzing in the sunny ray, from which she was sheltered. When she could no longer see to read, she deposited her book in the place she had taken it from, and rambled to the deepest recesses of the grove. This was the time she loved to saunter carelessly along, while all the jarring passions that obtruding care excited, were hushed to peace by the solemnity and silence of the hour, and the soul felt at once composed and elevated ; this was the time she loved to think on days departed, and sketch those scenes of felicity which, she trusted, the

days to come would realize. Sometimes she gave way to all the enthusiasm of a young and romantic fancy, and pictured to herself the time when the shades she wandered beneath were

————— the haunts of meditation,
 The scenes where ancient bards th' inspiring breath
 Ecstatic felt, and, from this world retir'd,
 Convers'd with angels and immortal forms,
 On gracious errands bent; to save the fall
 Of virtue struggling on the brink of vice. THOMSON.

Her health gradually grew better, as the tranquillity of her mind increased; a faint blush again began to tinge her cheek, and her lovely eyes beamed a placid lustre through their long silken lashes.

She returned one evening from her usual ramble, with one of those unaccountable depressions on her spirits, to which, in a greater or lesser degree, almost every one is subject. When she retired to bed, her sleeping thoughts took the tincture of her waking ones, and images of the most affecting nature arose in her mind: she went through the whole story of her mother's sufferings, and suddenly dreamt she beheld her expiring under the greatest torture; and that, while she wept her fate, the clouds opened, and discovered her adorned with seraphic beauty, bending, with a benignant look, towards her child, as if to assure her of her present happiness. From this dream Amanda was roused by the softest, sweetest strains of music she had ever heard: she started with amazement; she opened her eyes, and saw a light around her, far exceeding that of twilight. Her dream

dream had made a deep impression on her, and a solemn awe diffused itself over her mind ; she trembled universally : but soon did the emotion of awe give way to that of surprise, when she heard, on the outside of the window, the following lines from Cowley, sung in a manly and exquisitely melodious voice, the music which awoke her being only a symphony to them :—

Awake, awake, my lyre,
And tell thy silent master's humble tale,
In sounds that may prevail,
Sounds that gentle thoughts inspire :
Though so exalted she,
And I so lowly be,
Tell her such diff'rent notes make all thy harmony.

Hark ! how the strings awake !
And though the moving hand approach not near,
Themselves, with awful fear,
A kind of num'rous trembling make.
Now all thy forces try,
Now all thy charms apply,
Revenge upon her ear the conquest of her eye.

Weak lyre, thy virtue sure
Is useless here, since thou art only found
To cure, but not to wound ;
And she to wound, but not to cure ;
Too weak too wilt thou prove
My passion to remove—
Physic to other ills, thou'rt nourishment to love.

Sleep, sleep again, my lyre ;
For thou canst never tell my humble tale,
In sounds that will prevail,
Nor gentle thoughts in her inspire.
All thy vain mirth lay by,
Bid thy strings silent lie ;
Sleep, sleep again, my lyre, and let thy master die.

Ere

Ere the voice ceased, Amanda had quite shaken off the effects of her dream; and when all again was silent, she drew back the curtain, and saw it was the moon, then at the full, which, beaming through the calico window-curtains, cast such a light around her.

The remainder of the night was passed in ruminating on this strange incident. It was evident the serenade was addressed to her; but she had not seen any one since her arrival in the neighbourhood, from whom she could have expected such a compliment, or indeed believed capable of paying it: that the person who paid it was one of no mean accomplishments, from his performance, she could not doubt. She resolved to conceal the incident, but to make such inquiries, the next morning, as might possibly lead to a discovery. From the answers those inquiries received, the clergyman was the only person whom, with any degree of probability, she could fix upon: she had never seen him, and was at a loss to conceive how he knew any thing of her; till it occurred he might have seen her going to Tudor Hall, or rambling about it.

From the moment this idea arose, Amanda deemed it imprudent to go to the Hall; yet, so great was the pleasure she experienced there, she could not think of relinquishing it without the greatest reluctance. She at last considered, if she had a companion, it would remove any appearance of impropriety. Ellen was generally employed at knitting; Amanda therefore saw that going to the Hall could not interfere with her

her employment, and accordingly asked her attendance thither, which the other joyfully agreed to.

“While you look over the books,” said Ellen, as they entered the library, “I will just step away about a little business.”—“I beg you may not be long absent,” cried Amanda. Ellen assured her she would not, and flew off directly. She had in truth seen, in an enclosure near the Hall, Tim Chip, the carpenter, at work, who was the rural Adonis of these shades. He had long selected Ellen for the fair nymph of his affection; which distinction excited not a little jealousy among the village girls, and considerably increased the vanity of Ellen, who triumphed in a conquest that at once gratified her love and exalted her above her companions.

Amanda entered the music-room. The harmony of the preceding night dwelt upon her memory, and she sat down to the piano-forte, and attempted it: her ear soon informed her the attempt was successful, and her voice (as the words were familiar to her) then accompanied the instrument. “Heavenly sounds!” exclaimed some one behind her, as she concluded singing. Amanda started in terror and confusion from the chair, and beheld a tall and elegant young man standing by it. “Good Heaven!” cried she, blushing, and hastily moving to the door, scarcely knowing what she said, “where can Ellen be?”—“And do you think,” said the stranger, springing forward, and intercepting her passage, “I shall let you escape in this manner?—No, really, my

my charming girl, I should be the most insensible of beings, if I did not avail myself of the happy opportunity chance afforded, of entreating leave to be introduced to you." As he spoke, he gently seized her hand, and carried it to his lips.—"Be assured, Sir," said Amanda, "the chance, as you call it, which brought us together, is to me most unpleasant, as I fear it has exposed me to greater freedom than I have been accustomed to."—"And is it possible," said he, "you really feel an emotion of anger? Well, I will relinquish my lovely captive, if she condescendingly promises to continue here a few minutes longer, and grants me permission to attend her home."—"I insist on being immediately released," exclaimed Amanda.—"I obey," cried he, softly pressing her hand, and then resigning it: "you are free—would to Heaven I could say the same!"

Amanda hurried to the grove, but, in her confusion, took the wrong path, and vainly cast her eyes around in search of Ellen. The stranger followed, and his eyes wandered with hers in every direction they took. "And why," cried he, "so unpropitious to my wish of introduction? a wish it was impossible not to feel from the moment you were seen." Amanda made no reply, but still hurried on; and her fatigue and agitation were soon too much for her present weak state of health; and, quite overpowered, she was at last compelled to stop, and lean against a tree for support. Exercise had diffused its softest bloom over her cheek, her hair fluttered in the breeze
that

that played around her, and her eyes, with the beautiful embarrassment of modesty, were bent to the ground, to avoid the stranger's ardent gaze. He watched her with looks of the most impassioned admiration; and softly exclaimed, as if the involuntary exclamation of rapture, "Good Heavens, what an angel!—Fatigue has made you ill," he said; "and it is your haste to avoid me has occasioned this disorder. Could you look into my heart, you would there find there was no reason to fly me; the emotions that lovely face excites in a soul of sensibility, could never be inimical to your safety."

At this moment Amanda perceived Ellen leaping over a stile: she had at last left Mr. Chip, after promising to meet him in the evening at the cottage, where the blind harper was to attend, to give them a dance. She ran forward, but, on seeing the stranger, started back, in the utmost amazement. "Bless me!" said Amanda, "I thought you would never come."

"You go then," said the stranger, "and give me no hope of a second interview! Oh say," taking her hand, "will you not allow me to wait upon you?"—"It is utterly impossible," replied Amanda; "and I shall be quite distressed, if longer detained."—"See then," said he, "opening a gate which led from the grove into the road, "how like a courteous knight I release you from painful captivity! But think not, thou beautiful, though cruel fair one," he continued gaily, "I shall resign my hopes of yet conquering thy obduracy."



"Oh

“ Oh Lord !” cried Ellen, as they quitted the grove, “ how did you meet with Lord Mortimer ?” —“ Lord Mortimer !” repeated Amanda.—“ Yes, himself inteed,” said Ellen ; “ and I think in all my pörn days I was never more surprised than when I saw him with you, looking so soft and so sweet upon you. To be sure, he is a beautiful man ; and besides that, the young Lort of Tudor Hall.”—Amanda’s spirits were greatly flurried, when she heard he was the master of the mansion, where he had found her seated with as much composure as if possessor of it.

As they were entering the cottage, Ellen, twitching Amanda’s sleeve, cried, “ Look, look !” Amanda, hastily turning round, perceived Lord Mortimer, who had slowly followed them half way down the lane. On being observed, he smiled ; and, kissing his hand, retired.

Nurse was quite delighted at her child being seen by Lord Mortimer (which Ellen informed her of :) her beauty, she was convinced, had excited his warmest admiration ; and admiration might lead, she did not doubt, to something more important. Amanda’s heart fluttered with an agreeable sensation, as Ellen described to her mother the tender looks with which Lord Mortimer regarded her. She was at first inclined to believe that, in his Lordship, she had found the person whose melody so agreeably disturbed her slumbers ; but a minute’s reflection convinced her this belief must be erroneous. It was evident,

Went, or she would have heard of it, that Lord Mortimer had only arrived that day at Tudor Hall; and, even had he seen her before, upon consideration, she thought it improbable that he should have taken the trouble of coming in such a manner to a person in a station, to all appearance, so infinitely beneath his own. Yes, it was plain, chance alone had led him to the apartment where she sat; and the commonplace gallantry fashionable men are accustomed to, had dictated the language he had addressed to her. She half sighed, as she settled the matter thus in her mind, and again fixed on the curate as her serenader. Well, she was determined, if ever he came in her way, and dropped a hint of an attachment, she would immediately crush any hopes he might have the vanity to entertain.

CHAP. V.

The blossoms op'ning to the day,
The dews of heaven refin'd,
Could nought of purity display,
To emulate his mind.

GOLDSMITH.

AFTER tea, Amanda asked little Betsey to accompany her in a walk; for Ellen, dressed in all her rural finery, had gone, early in the evening, to the dance. But Amanda did not begin her walk with her usual alacrity; her bonnet was so heavy, and then

then it made her look so ill, that she could not go out till she had made some alterations in it : still it would not do. A hat was tried on ; she liked it better, and at last set out ; but not, as usual, did she pause, whenever a new or lovely feature in the landscape struck her view, to express her admiration : she was often, indeed, so absorbed in thought, as to start when Betsey addressed her, which was often the case ; for little Betsey delighted to have Miss Amanda trace figures for her in the clouds, and assist her in gathering wild flowers.

Scarcely knowing which way they went, Amanda rambled to the village ; and feeling herself fatigued, turned into the churchyard, to rest upon one of the raised flags. The graves were ornamented with garlands of cut paper, interwoven with flowers—tributes of love from the village maids to the memory of their departed friends.

As Amanda rested herself, she twined a garland of the wild flowers she had gathered with Betsey, and hung it over the grave of Lady Malvina ; her fine eyes raised to Heaven, as if invoking, at that moment, the spirit of her mother, to regard the vernal offering of her child ; while her white hands were folded on her heart, as she softly exclaimed, “ Alas ! is this the only tribute for me to pay ? ”

A low murmur, as if from voices near, startled her at the instant. She turned with quickness, and saw Lord Mortimer, with a young clergyman, half hid by some trees, attentively observing her. Blush-
ing

ing and confused, she drew her hat over her face, and, catching Betsey's hand, hastened to the cottage.

Lord Mortimer had wandered about the skirts of the cottage, in hopes of meeting her in the evening. On seeing the direction she had taken from it, he followed her ; and, just as she entered the churchyard, unexpectedly met the curate. His company, at a moment so propitious for joining Amanda, he could well have dispensed with ; for he was more anxious than he chose to acknowledge to himself, to become acquainted with her.

Lord Mortimer was now in the glowing prime of life ; his person was strikingly elegant, and his manners insinuatingly pleasing ; seducing sweetness dwelt in his smile ; and, as he pleased, his expressive eyes could sparkle with intelligence, or beam with sensibility : and, to the eloquence of his language, the harmony of his voice imparted a charm that seldom failed of being irresistible. His soul was naturally the seat of every virtue ; but an elevated rank, and splendid fortune, had placed him in a situation somewhat inimical to their interests ; for he had not always strength to resist the strong temptations which surrounded him : but, though he sometimes wandered from the boundaries of virtue, he had never yet entered upon the confines of vice, never really injured innocence, or done a deed which could wound the bosom of a friend : his heart was alive to every noble propensity of nature ; compassion was one of its strongest feelings, and never did his hand refuse obedience

obedience to the generous impulse. Among the various accomplishments he possessed, was an exquisite taste for music, which, with every other talent, had been cultivated to the highest degree of possible perfection : his spending many years abroad had given him every requisite advantage for improving it. The soft melodious voice of Amanda would, of itself, almost have made a conquest of his heart ; but, aided by the charms of her face and person, altogether were irresistible.

He had come into Wales on purpose to pay a visit to an old friend in the Isle of Anglesey : he did not mean to stop at Tudor Hall ; but, within a few miles of it, the phaeton, in which he travelled from the fineness of the weather, was overturned, and he severely hurt. He procured a hired carriage, and proceeded to the Hall, to put himself into the hands of the good old housekeeper, Mrs. Abergwilly, who, possessing as great a stock of medical knowledge as Lady Bountiful herself, he believed would cure his bruises with as much, or rather more expedition, than any country surgeon whatever. He gave strict orders that his being at the Hall should not be mentioned, as he did not choose, the few days he hoped and believed he should continue there, to be disturbed by visits, which he knew would be paid, if an intimation of his being there was received.

From an apartment adjoining the music-room, he had discovered Amanda : though scarcely able to move, at the first sound of her voice he stole to the door,

door, which, being a little open, gave him an opportunity of seeing her perfectly : and nothing but his situation prevented his immediately appearing before her, and expressing the admiration she had inspired him with. As soon as she departed, he sent for the housekeeper, to inquire who the beautiful stranger was. Mrs. Abergwilly only knew she was a young lady lately come from London, to lodge at David Edwin's cottage, whose wife had entreated permission for her to read in the library, which, she added, she had given, seeing that his Lordship read in his dressing-room ; but, if he pleased, she would send Miss Dunford word not to come again.—“ By no means,” his Lordship said. Amanda therefore continued her visits as usual, little thinking with what critical regard and fond admiration she was observed.

Lord Mortimer daily grew better ; but the purpose for which he had come into Wales seemed utterly forgotten. He had a tincture of romance in his disposition, and availed himself of his recovery to gratify it, by taking a lute, and serenading his lovely cottage girl. He could no longer restrain his impatience to be known to her ; and the next day, stealing from his retirement, surprised her, as already related.

As he could not, without an utter violation of good manners, shake off Howell, he contented himself with following Amanda into the churchyard, where, shaded by the trees, he and his companion stood watching her unnoticed, till an involuntary exclamation

exclamation of rapture from his Lordship discovered their situation. When she departed, he read the inscription on the tombstone ; but, from the difference of names, this gave no insight into any connexion between her and the person it mentioned. Howell could give no information of either ; he was but a young man, lately appointed to the parsonage, and had never seen Amanda till that evening.

Lord Mortimer was solicitous, even to a degree of anxiety, to learn the real situation of Amanda. As Howell, in his pastoral function, had free access to the houses of his parishioners, it occurred to him that he would be an excellent person to discover it ; he therefore, as if from curiosity alone, expressed his wish of knowing who she was, and requested Howell, if convenient, to follow her directly to Edwin's cottage (where, he said, by chance, he heard she lodged), and endeavour to find out, from the good people, every thing about her. This request Howell readily complied with ; the face, the figure, the melancholy, and, above all, the employment of Amanda, had interested his sensibility, and excited his curiosity.

He arrived soon after her at the cottage, and found her laughing at her nurse, who was telling her she was certain she should see her a great lady. Amanda rose to retire at his entrance ; but he, perceiving her intention, declared, if he disturbed her, he would immediately depart. She accordingly reseated herself, secretly pleased at doing so ; as she thought,
either

either from some look or word of the curate's, she might discover if he really was the person who had serenaded her. From this idea, she shewed no averseness to enter into-conversation with him.

The whole family, nurse excepted, had followed Ellen to the dance; and the good woman thought she could do no less, for the honour of Howell's visit, than prepare a little comfortable supper for him. The benevolence of his disposition, and innocent gaiety of his temper, had rendered him a great favourite amongst his rustic neighbours, whom he frequently amused with simple ballads and pleasant tales. Amanda and he were left *tête-à-tête*, while the nurse was busied in preparing her entertainment; and she was soon as much pleased with the elegance and simplicity of his manners, as he was with the innocence and sweetness of hers. The objects about them naturally led to rural subjects, and, from them, to what might almost be termed a dissertation on poetry. This was a theme peculiarly agreeable to Howell, who wooed the pensive muse beneath the sylvan shade; nor was it less so to Amanda—she was a zealous worshipper of the Muses, though diffidence made her conceal her invocations to them. She was led to point out the beauties of her favourite authors; and the soft sensibility of her voice raised a kind of tender enthusiasm in Howell's soul. He gazed and listened, as if his eye could never be satisfied with seeing, or his ear with hearing. At his particular request, Amanda recited the pathetic description

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scription of the curate and his lovely daughter, from the Deserted Village : a tear stole down her cheek, as she proceeded. Howell softly laid his hand on hers, and exclaimed, " Good Heavens, what an angel !"—" Come, come," said Amanda, smiling at the energy with which he spoke, " you, at least, should have nothing to do with flattery."—" Flattery !" repeated he emphatically ; " Oh Heavens, did you but know my sincerity !"—" Well, well," cried she, wishing to change the subject, " utter no expression, in future, which shall make me doubt it."—" To flatter you," said he, " would be impossible, since the highest eulogium must be inadequate to your merits."—" Again !" said Amanda.—" Believe me," he replied, " flattery is a meanness I abhor ; the expressions you denominate as such, proceed from emotions I should condemn myself for want of sensibility if I did not experience."

The nurse's duck and green pease were now set upon the table ; but in vain did she press Howell to eat—his eyes were too well feasted to allow him to attend to his palate. Finding her entreaties ineffectual in one respect, she tried them in another, and begged he would sing a favourite old ballad. This he at first hesitated to do, till Amanda, from a secret motive of her own, joined in the entreaty ; and, the moment she heard his voice, she was convinced he was not the person who had been at the outside of her window. After his complaisance to her, she could not refuse him one song : the melodious sounds

wunk into his heart—he seemed fascinated to the spot; nor thought of moving, till the nurse gave him a hint for that purpose, being afraid of Amanda's sitting up too late. He sighed, as he entered his humble dwelling: it was perhaps the first sigh he had ever heaved for the narrowness of his fortune. "Yet," cried he, casting his eyes around, "in this abode, low and humble as it is, a soul like Amanda's might enjoy felicity."

The purpose for which Lord Mortimer sent him to the cottage, and Lord Mortimer himself, were forgotten. His Lordship had engaged Howell to sup with him after the performance of his embassy, and impatiently waited his arrival; he felt displeased, as the hours wore away without bringing him: and unable, at last, to restrain the impetuosity of his feelings, proceeded to the parsonage, which he entered a few minutes after Howell. He asked, with no great complacency, the reason he had not fulfilled his engagement? Absorbed in one idea, Howell felt confused, agitated, and unable to frame any excuse; he therefore simply said, what in reality was true, that he had utterly forgotten it.—"I suppose then," exclaimed Lord Mortimer, in a ruffled voice, "you have been very agreeably entertained."—"Delightfully," said Howell.

Lord Mortimer grew more displeased; but his anger was now levelled against himself as well as Howell. He repented and regretted the folly which had thrown Howell in the way of such temptation, and had perhaps raised a rival to himself.

“ Well,” cried he, after a few hasty paces about the room, “ and pray, what do you know about Miss Dunford ?”—“ About her !” repeated Howell, as if starting from a reverie ; “ why, nothing.”—“ Nothing !” re-echoed his Lordship.—“ No,” replied Howell, “ except that she is an angel.”

Lord Mortimer was now thoroughly convinced all was over with the poor parson ; and resolved, in consequence of this conviction, to lose no time himself. He could not depart without inquiring how the evening had been spent ? and envied Howell the happy minutes he so eloquently described.

CHAP. VI.

Hither turn

Thy graceful footsteps ; hither, gentle maid,
Incline thy polish'd forehead. Let thy eyes
Effuse the mildness of their azure dawn ;
And may the fanning breezes waft aside
Thy radiant locks, disclosing, as they bend
With airy softness from the marble neck,
The cheek fair blooming, and the rosy lip ;
Where winning smiles, and pleasure, sweet as love,
With sanctity and wisdom, temp'ring blend
Their soft allurements.

AKENSIDE.

WHILE Amanda was at breakfast the next morning, Betsey brought a letter to her. Expecting to hear from her father, she eagerly opened it ; and, to her great surprise, perused the following lines :—

“ 70

“ TO MISS DUNFORD.

“ Lord Mortimer begs leave to assure Miss Dunford, he shall remain dissatisfied with himself, till he has an opportunity of personally apologizing for his intrusion yesterday. If the sweetness of her disposition fulfils the promise her face has given of it, he flatters himself his pardon will speedily be accorded ; yet, never shall he think himself entirely forgiven, if her visits to the library are discontinued. Happy and honoured shall Lord Mortimer consider himself, if Tudor Hall contains any thing which can amuse or merit the attention of Miss Dunford.

“ July 17th.”

“ From Lord Mortimer !” said Amanda, with involuntary emotion : “ Well, this really has astonished me.”—“ Oh Lort, my tear !” cried the nurse, in a rapture. Amanda waved her hand to silence her, as the servant stood in the outside room. She called Betsey : “ Tell the servant——,” said she.—“ Lort !” cried the nurse softly, and twitching her sleeve, “ write his Lortship a little pit of a note, just to let him see what a pretty scribe you are.”

Amanda could not refrain smiling ; but, disengaging herself from the good woman, she arose, and going to the servant, desired him to tell his Lord, she thanked him for his polite attention, but that, in future, it would not be in her power to go to the

library. When she returned to the room, the nurse bitterly lamented her not writing. "Great matters," she said, "had often arisen from small beginnings. She could not conceive why his Lordship should be treated in such a manner; it was not the way she had ever served her Edwin. Lord, she remembered, if she got but the scrawl of a pen from him, she used to sit up to answer it."

Amanda tried to persuade her it was neither necessary nor proper for her to write. An hour passed in arguments between them, when two servants came from Tudor Hall to the cottage with a small book-case, which they sent in to Amanda, and their Lord's compliments, that, in a few minutes, he would have the honour of paying his respects to her.

Amanda felt agitated by this message; but it was the agitation of involuntary pleasure. Her room was always perfectly neat, yet did the nurse and her two daughters now busy themselves with trying, if possible, to put it into nicer order: the garden was ransacked for the choicest flowers to ornament it; nor would they depart till they saw Lord Mortimer approaching. Amanda, who had opened the book-case, then snatched up a book, to avoid the appearance of sitting in expectation of his coming.

He entered with an air at once easy and respectful, and, taking her hand, besought forgiveness for his intrusion the preceding day. Amanda blushed, and faltered out something of the confusion she had experienced from being so surprised. He reseated her,

her, and drawing a chair close to hers, said he had taken the liberty of sending her a few books to amuse her, till she again condescended to visit the library, which he entreated her to do ; promising that, if she pleased, both it and the music-room should be sacred to her alone. She thanked him for his politeness, but declared she must be excused from going. Lord Mortimer regarded her with a degree of tender admiration—an admiration heightened by the contrast he drew in his mind between her and the generality of fashionable women he had seen, whom he often secretly censured for sacrificing too largely at the shrine of Art and Fashion. The pale and varied blush which mantled the cheek of Amanda, at once announced itself to be an involuntary suffusion, and her dress was only remarkable for its simplicity : she wore a plain robe of dimity, and an abbey-cap of thin muslin, that shaded, without concealing, her face, and gave to it the soft expression of a Madona : her beautiful hair fell in long ringlets down her back, and curled upon her forehead. “ Good Heavens ! ” cried Lord Mortimer, “ how has your idea dwelt upon my mind since last night ! If, in the morning, I was charmed, in the evening I was enraptured. Your looks, your attitude, were then beyond all that imagination could conceive of loveliness and grace ; you appeared as a being of another world, mourning over a kindred spirit. I felt

‘ Awe-struck, and, as I pass’d, I worshipp’d.’

Confused by the energy of his words, and the ardent glances he directed towards her, Amanda, scarcely knowing what she did, turned over the leaves of the book she still held in her hand. In doing so, she saw written on the title-page, "The Earl of Cherbury."—"Cherbury!" repeated she, in astonishment.—"Do you know him?" asked Lord Mortimer.—"Not personally; but I revere, I esteem him: he is one of the best, the truest friends, my father ever had."—"Oh! how happy," exclaimed Lord Mortimer, "would his son be, were he capable of inspiring you with such sentiments as you avow for him!"—"His son!" repeated Amanda, in a tone of surprise, and looking at Lord Mortimer.—"Yes," replied he. "Is it then possible," he continued, "that you are really ignorant of his being my father?"

Surprise kept her silent a few minutes; for her father had never given her any account of the Earl's family, till about the period that he thought of applying to him; and his mind was so distracted, at that time, on his own account, that she scarcely understood a word he uttered. In the country, she had never heard Lord Cherbury mentioned; for Tudor Hall belonged not to him, but to Lord Mortimer, to whom an uncle had bequeathed it.

"I thought indeed, my Lord," said Amanda, as soon as she recovered her voice, "that your Lordship's title was familiar to me; though why, from the hurry and perplexity in which particular circumstances

stances involved me, I could not tell."—"Oh, suffer," cried Lord Mortimer, with one of his most insinuating smiles, "the friendship which our parents feel, to be continued to their children! Let this," taking her soft hand, and pressing his lips to it, "be the pledge of amity between us." He now inquired when the intimacy between her father and his had commenced? and where the former was? But from those inquiries Amanda shrunk: she reflected that, without her father's permission, she had no right to answer them; and that, in a situation like his and hers, too much caution could not be observed. Besides, both pride and delicacy made her solicitous, at present, to conceal her father's real situation from Lord Mortimer: she could not bear to think it should be known his sole dependence was on Lord Cherbury, uncertain as it was whether that nobleman would ever answer his expectations. She repented having ever dropped a hint of the intimacy subsisting between them, which surprise alone had made her do, and tried to wave the subject. In this design Lord Mortimer assisted her; for he had too much penetration not instantly to perceive it confused and distressed her. He requested permission to renew his visit; but Amanda, though well inclined to grant his request, yielded to prudence instead of inclination, and begged he would excuse her; the seeming disparity (she could not help saying) in their situations, would render it very imprudent in her to receive such visits: she blushed,

half sighed, and bent her eyes to the ground, as she spoke. Lord Mortimer continued to entreat, but she was steady in refusing: he would not depart, however, till he had obtained permission to attend her, in the evening, to a part of Tudor Grove which she had never yet seen, and he described as particularly beautiful. He wanted to call for her at the appointed hour, but she would not suffer this; and he was compelled to be contented with leave to meet her near the cottage, when it came.

With a beating heart she kept her appointment, and found his Lordship not many yards distant from the cottage, impatiently waiting her approach. A brighter bloom than usual glowed upon her cheek, as she listened to his ardent expressions of admiration: yet not to such expressions, which would soon have sated an ear of delicacy like Amanda's, did Lord Mortimer confine himself—he conversed on various subjects; and the eloquence of his language, the liveliness of his imagination, and the justness of his remarks, equally amused and interested his fair companion. There was indeed, in the disposition and manners of Lord Mortimer, that happy mixture of animation and softness, which at once amuses the fancy and attracts the heart; and never had Amanda experienced such minutes as she now passed with him, so delightful in their progress, so rapid in their course.

On entering the walk he had mentioned to her, she saw he had not exaggerated its beauties. After
passing

passing through many long and shaded alleys, they came to a smooth green lawn, about which the trees rose in the form of an amphitheatre; and their dark, luxuriant, and chequered shades, proclaimed that, amongst them,

The rude axe, with heaved stroke,
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt. MILTON.

The lawn gently sloped to a winding stream, so clear as perfectly to reflect the beautiful scenery of heaven, now glowing with the gold and purple of the setting sun. From the opposite bank of the stream rose a stupendous mountain, diversified with little verdant hills and dales, and skirted with the wild shrubbery, whose blossoms perfumed the air with the most balmy fragrance.

Lord Mortimer prevailed on Amanda to sit down upon a rustic bench, beneath the spreading branches of an oak entwined with ivy. Here they had not sat long, ere the silence which reigned around was suddenly interrupted by strains, at once low, solemn, and melodious, that seemed to creep along the water till they had reached the place where they sat; and then, as if a Naiad of the stream had left her rushy couch to do them homage, they swelled by degrees into full melody, which the mountain-echoes alternately revived and heightened. It appeared like enchantment to Amanda, and her eyes, turned to Lord Mortimer, seemed to say, it was to his magic it was

owing. After enjoying her surprise some minutes, he acknowledged the music proceeded from two servants of his, who played on the clarinet and French horn, and were stationed in a dell of the opposite mountain.

Notwithstanding all her former thoughts to the contrary, Amanda now conceived a strong suspicion that Lord Mortimer was really the person who had serenaded her. That she conceived pleasure from the idea, is scarcely necessary to say: she had reason soon to find she was not mistaken. Lord Mortimer solicited her for the lady's song in *Comus*, saying the present situation was peculiarly adapted for it. On her hesitating, he told her she had no plea to offer for not complying, as he himself had heard her enchanting powers in it. Amanda started, and eagerly inquired, when? or by what means? It was too late for his Lordship to recede; and he not only confessed his concealment near the music-room, but his visit to her window. A soft confusion, intermingled with pleasure, pervaded the soul of Amanda at this confession; and it was some time ere she was sufficiently composed, to comply with Lord Mortimer's solicitations for her to sing. She at last allowed him to lead her to the centre of a little rustic bridge thrown over the stream, from whence her voice could be sufficiently distinguished for the music to keep time to it, as Lord Mortimer had directed. Her plaintive and harmonious invocation,

tion, answered by the low breathing of the clarinet, which appeared like the softest echo of the mountain, had the finest effect imaginable, and

“ Took th’ imprison’d soul, and wrapt it in Elysium.”

Lord Mortimer, for the first time in his life, found himself at a loss to express what he felt : he conducted her back to the seat, where, to her astonishment, she beheld fruits, ices, and creams, laid out as if by the hand of magic, for no mortal appeared near the spot. Dusky twilight now warned her to return home ; but Lord Mortimer would not suffer her to depart, till she had partaken of this collation.

He was not by any means satisfied with the idea of only beholding her for an hour or two of an evening ; and, when they came near the cottage, desired to know whether it was to chance alone he was, in future, to be indebted for seeing her ? Again he entreated permission to visit her sometimes of a morning ; promising he would never disturb her avocations, but would be satisfied merely to sit and read to her whenever she chose to work, and felt herself inclined for that amusement. Amanda’s refusals grew fainter ; and at last she said, on the above-mentioned conditions he might sometimes come. That he availed himself of this permission, is scarcely necessary to say ; and, from this time, few days passed without their seeing each other.

The cold reserve of Amanda by degrees wore away ; from her knowledge of his family, she considered him as more than a new or common acquaintance.

quaintance. The emotions she felt for him, she thought sanctioned by that knowledge, and the gratitude she felt to Lord Cherbury for his former conduct to her father, which claimed, she thought, her respect and esteem for so near and valuable a connexion of his : the worth too, she could not avoid acknowledging to herself, of Lord Mortimer, would, of itself alone, have authorized them. Her heart felt he was one of the most amiable, most pleasing of men : she could scarcely disguise, in any degree, the lively pleasure she experienced in his society ; nay, she scarcely thought it necessary to disguise it ; for it resulted as much from innocence as sensibility, and was placed to the account of friendship. But Lord Mortimer was too penetrating, not soon to perceive he might ascribe it to a softer impulse : with the most delicate attention, the most tender regard, he daily, nay, hourly, insinuated himself into her heart, and secured for himself an interest in it ere she was aware, which the efforts of subsequent resolution could not overcome. He was the companion of her rambles, the alleviator of her griefs : the care which so often saddened her brow, always vanished at his presence ; and in conversing with him, she forgot every cause of sorrow.

He once or twice delicately hinted at those circumstances which, at his first visit, she had mentioned as sufficiently distressing to bewilder her recollection. Amanda, with blushes, always shrunk from the subject, sickening at the idea of his knowing that

her

her father depended on his for future support. If he ever addressed her seriously on the subject of the regard he professed for her (which, from his attentions, she could not help sometimes flattering herself would be the case), then indeed there would be no longer room for concealment; but, except such a circumstance took place, she could not bring herself to make any humiliating discovery.

Tudor Grove was the favourite scene of their rambles: sometimes she allowed him to lead her to the music-room; but as these visits were not frequent, a lute was brought from it to the cottage, and, in the recess in the garden, she often sung and played for the enraptured Mortimer: there, too, he frequently read for her, always selecting some elegant and pathetic piece of poetry, to which the harmony of his voice gave additional charms—a voice which sunk into the heart of Amanda, and interested her sensibility even more than the subject he perused.

Often straying to the valley's verge, as they contemplated the lovely prospect around, only bounded by distant and stupendous mountains, Lord Mortimer, in strains of eloquence, would describe the beautiful scenes and extensive landscapes beyond them; and whenever Amanda expressed a wish, as she sometimes would from thoughtless innocence, of viewing them, he would softly sigh, and wish he was to be her guide to them; as to point out beauties to a refined and cultivated taste like hers, would be,
to

to him, the greatest pleasure he could possibly experience.

Seated sometimes on the brow of a shrubby hill, as they viewed the scattered hamlets beneath, he would expatiate on the pleasure he conceived there must be in passing a tranquil life with one lovely and beloved object : his insidious eyes, turned towards Amanda at these minutes, seemed to say, she was the being who could realize all the ideas he entertained of such a life ; and when he asked her opinion of his sentiments, her soft confusion and faltering accents too plainly betrayed her conscious feelings. Every delicacy which Tudor Hall contained, was daily sent to the cottage, notwithstanding Amanda's prohibition to the contrary ; and sometimes Lord Mortimer was permitted to dine with her in the recess. Three weeks spent in this familiar manner, endeared and attached them to each other more than months would have done, passed in situations liable to interruption.

CHAP. VII.

She alone,
Heard, felt, and seen, possesses every thought,
Fills every sense, and pants in every vein.
Books are but formal dulness, tedious friends;
And sad amid the social band he sits,
Lonely and unattentive. From his tongue
Th' unfinish'd period falls, while, borne away
On swelling thought, his wafted spirit flies
To the vain bosom of his distant fair. THOMSON.

HOWELL was no stranger to the manner in which hours rolled away at the cottage; he hovered round it, and seized every interval of Lord Mortimer's absence, to present himself before Amanda: his emotions betrayed his feelings, and Amanda affected reserve towards him, in hopes of suppressing his passion—a passion, she now began to think, when hopeless, must be dreadful.

Howell was a prey to melancholy; but not for himself alone did he mourn—fears for the safety and happiness of Amanda added to his dejection; he dreaded that Lord Mortimer perhaps, like too many of the fashionable men, might make no scruple of availing himself of any advantage which could be derived from a predilection in his favour. He knew him, it is true, to be amiable; but, in opposition to that,

that, he knew him to be volatile, and sometimes wild; and he trembled for the unsuspecting credulity of Amanda. "Though lost to me," exclaimed the unhappy young man, "oh never, sweetest Amanda, mayst thou be lost to thyself!"

He had received many proofs of esteem and friendship from Lord Mortimer; he therefore studied how he might admonish without offending, and save Amanda without injuring himself. It at last occurred, that the pulpit would be the surest way of effecting his wishes; where the subject, addressed to all, might particularly strike the one for whom it was intended, without appearing as if designed for that purpose, and timely convince him, if indeed he meditated any injurious design against Amanda, of its flagrance.

On the following Sunday, as he expected, Lord Mortimer and Amanda attended service: his Lordship's pew was opposite the one she sat in, and we fear his eyes too often wandered in that direction. The youthful monitor at last ascended the pulpit: his text was from Jeremiah, and to the following effect: "She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; among all her lovers, she hath none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her—they are become her enemies."

After a slight introduction, in which he regretted that a declension of moral principles demanded such an exhortation as he was about to give, he commenced.

menced his subject. He described a young female, adorned with beauty and innocence, walking forward in the path of integrity, which a virtuous education had early marked for her to take, and rejoicing as she went, with all around her ; when, in the midst of happiness, unexpected calamity suddenly surprised and precipitated her from prosperity into the deepest distress. He described the benefits she derived in this trying period, from early implanted virtue and religion : “ Taught by them,” he proceeded, “ the lovely mourner turns not to the world for consolation ; no, she looks up to her Creator for comfort, whose supporting aid is so particularly promised to afflicted worth : cheered by them, she is able to exert the little talents of genius and taste, and draw upon industry for her future support : her active virtue she thinks the best proof of submission she can give to the will of Heaven ; and in these laudable exertions she finds a conscious peace, which the mere possession of fortune could never bestow. While thus employed, a son of Perfidy sees and marks her for his prey, because she is at once lovely and helpless : her unsuspecting credulity lays her open to his arts, and his blandishments by degrees allure her heart. The snare which he has spread, at last involves her ; with the inconstancy of libertinism, he soon deserts her, and again she is plunged into distress. But mark the difference of her first and second fall : conscience no longer lends its opposing aid to stem her sorrow ; despair, instead of hope, arises ;

arises ; without one friend to sooth the pangs of death, one pitying soul to whisper peace to her departing spirit—insulted too, perhaps, by some unfeeling being, whom want of similar temptations alone, perhaps, saved from similar imprudence, she sinks, an early victim, to wretchedness.”

Howell paused ; the fulness of his heart mounted to his eyes, which involuntarily turned, and rested upon Amanda. Interested by his simple and pathetic eloquence, she had risen and leaned over the pew ; her head resting on her hand, and her eyes fastened on his face. Lord Mortimer had also risen, and alternately gazed upon Howell and Amanda, particularly watching the latter, to see how the subject would affect her. He at last saw the tears trickling down her cheeks ; the distresses of her own situation, and the stratagems of Belgrave, made her, in some respects, perceive a resemblance between herself and the picture Howell had drawn. Lord Mortimer was unutterably affected by her tears ; a faint sickness seized him, he sunk upon the seat, and covered his face with his handkerchief, to hide his emotion ; but, by the time service was over, it was pretty well dissipated.

Amanda returned home, and his Lordship waited for Howell's coming out of church. “What the devil, Howell,” said he, “did you mean by giving us such an exhortation ? Have you discovered any little affair going on between some of your rustic neighbours ?” The parson coloured, but remained silent.

silent. Lord Mortimer rallied him a little more, and then departed; but his gaiety was only assumed.

On his first acquaintance with Amanda, in consequence of what he heard from Mrs. Abergwilly and observed himself, he had been tempted to think she was involved in mystery; and what but impropriety, he thought, could occasion mystery? To see so young, so lovely, so elegant a creature, an inmate of a sequestered cottage, associating with people, in manners at least, so infinitely beneath her; to see her trembling and blushing, if a word was dropped that seemed tending to inquire into her motives for retirement; all these circumstances, I say, considered, naturally excited a suspicion injurious to her in the mind of Lord Mortimer; and he was tempted to think some deviation from prudence had, by depriving her of the favour of her friends, made her retire to obscurity; and that she would not dislike an opportunity of emerging from it, he could not help thinking. In consequence of these ideas, he could not think himself very culpable in encouraging the wishes her loveliness gave rise to: besides, he had some reason to suspect she desired to inspire him with these wishes; for Mrs. Abergwilly told him, she had informed Mrs. Edwin of his arrival, an information he could not doubt her having immediately communicated to Amanda; therefore, her continuing to come to the Hall seemed as if she wished to throw herself in his way. Mrs. Edwin had been indeed told of his arrival, but concealed it
from

from Amanda, that she should not be disappointed of going to the Hall, which she knew, if once informed of, she would not go to.

It is true, Lord Mortimer saw Amanda wore, at least, the semblance of innocence; but this could not remove his suspicions, so often had he seen it assumed to hide the artful stratagems of a depraved heart. Ah! why will the lovely female, adorned with all that heaven and earth can bestow to render her amiable, o'erleap the modesty of nature, and, by levity and boldness, lose all pretensions to the esteem which would otherwise be an involuntary tribute? Nor is it herself alone she injures; she hurts each child of purity, helps to point the sting of ridicule, and weave the web of art. We shun the blazing sun, but court his tempered beams; the rose which glares upon the day, is never so much sought as the bud enwrapt in the foliage; and, to use the expression of a late much-admired author, "the retiring graces have ever been reckoned the most beautiful."

He had never heard the Earl mention a person of the name of Dunford; and he knew not, or rather suspected little credit was to be given to her assertion of an intimacy between them, particularly as he saw her, whenever the subject was mentioned, shrinking from it in the greatest confusion. Her reserve he imputed to pretence; and flattering himself it would soon wear off, determined, for the present at least, to humour her affectation.

With

With such ideas, such sentiments, had Lord Mortimer's first visits to Amanda commenced ; but they experienced an immediate change, as the decreasing reserve of her manners gave him greater and more frequent opportunities of discovering her mental perfections. The strength of her understanding, the justness of her remarks, the liveliness of her fancy, above all, the purity which mingled in every sentiment, and the modesty which accompanied every word, filled him with delight and amazement : his doubts gradually lessened, and at last vanished ; and with them every design which they alone had ever given rise to. Esteem was now united to love, and real respect to admiration : in her society he only was happy ; and thought not, or rather would not suffer himself to think, on the consequence of such an attachment. It might be said, he was entranced in pleasure, from which Howell completely roused him, and made him seriously ask his heart, what were its intentions relative to Amanda ? Of such views as he perceived Howell suspected him of harbouring, his conscience entirely acquitted him ; yet so great were the obstacles he knew in the way of an union between him and Amanda, that he almost regretted, as must ever be the case when we act against our better judgment, that he had not fled at the first intimation of his danger. So truly formidable indeed did these obstacles appear, that he, at times, resolved to break with Amanda, if he could fix upon any plan for doing so without injuring

juring his honour, after the great attention he had paid her.

Ere he came to any final determination, however, he resolved to try and discover her real situation : if he ever left her, it would be a satisfaction to his heart to know whether his friendship would be serviceable ; and if an opposite measure was his plan, it could never be put in execution without the desired information. He accordingly wrote to his sister, Lady Araminta Dormer, who was then in the country with Lord Cherbury, requesting she would inquire of his father whether he knew a person of the name of Dunford ? and if he did, what his situation and family were ? Lord Mortimer begged her Ladyship not to mention the inquiries being dictated by him ; and promised, at some future period, to explain the reason of them.

He still continued his assiduities to Amanda ; and, at the expected time, received an answer to his letter : but how was he shocked and alarmed, when informed Lord Cherbury never knew a person of the name of Dunford ! His doubts began to revive ; but before he yielded entirely to them, he resolved to go to Amanda, and inquire from her, in the most explicit terms, how, and at what time, her father and the Earl had become acquainted ? determined, if she answered him without embarrassment, to mention to his sister whatever circumstances she related, lest a forgetfulness of them alone had made the Earl deny his knowledge of Dunford.

Just

Just as he was quitting the grove with this intent, he espied Edwin and his wife coming down a cross-road from the village, where they had been with poultry and vegetables. It instantly occurred to him, that these people, in the simplicity of their hearts, might unfold the real situation of Amanda, and save him the painful necessity of making inquiries, which she, perhaps, would not answer, without his real motives for making them were assigned, which was what he could not think of doing. Instead, therefore, of proceeding, he stopped till they came up to him; and then, with the most engaging affability, addressed them, inquiring whether they had been successful in the disposal of their goods? They answered bowing and curtseying; and he then insisted that, as they appeared tired, they should repair to the Hall, and rest themselves. This was too great an honour to be refused; and they followed their noble conductor, who hastened forward to order refreshment into a parlour for them.

The nurse, who, in her own way, was a cunning woman, instantly suspected, from the great and uncommon attention of Lord Mortimer, that he wanted to inquire into the situation of Amanda. As soon as she saw him at some distance, "David," cried she, "as sure as eggs are eggs," unpinning her white apron, and smoothing it nicely down as she spoke, "this young Lord wants to have our company, that he may find out something about Miss Amanda. Ah, pless her pretty face! I thought how

it would be : but we must be as cunning as foxes, and not tell too much, nor too little ; because if we told too much, it would offend her, and she would ask us how we got all our intelligence ? and would not think us over and above genteel, when she heard we had sifted Jemmy Hawthorn for it, when he came down from London with her. All we must do is, just to drop some hints, as it were, of her situation ; and then his Lordship, to be sure, will make his advantage of them, and ask her every thing about herself ; and then she will tell him of her own accord : so, David, mind what you say, I charge you.”—“ Aye, aye,” cried David, “ leave me alone ; I’ll warrant you’ll always find an old soldier cute enough for any poty.”

When they reached the Hall, they were shewn into a parlour, where Lord Mortimer was expecting them. With difficulty he made them sit down at the table, where meat and wine were laid out for them. After they had partaken of them, Lord Mortimer began with asking Edwin some questions about his farm, for he was a tenant on the Tudor estate, and whether there was any thing wanting to render it more comfortable?—“ No,” Edwin replied, with a low bow, thanking his honourable Lordship for his inquiry. Lord Mortimer spoke of his family. “ Aye, Cot pless the poor things,” said Edwin ; “ they are, to be sure, a fine thriving set of children.”

Still Lord Mortimer had not touched on the subject nearest his heart : he felt embarrassed and agitated.

tated. At last, with as much composure as he could assume, he asked how long they imagined Miss Dunford would stay with them?—Now was the nurse's time to speak—she had hitherto sat simpering and bowing. "That depended on circumstances," she said: "poor tear young lady, though their little cottage was so obscure, and so unlike any thing she had before been accustomed to, she made herself quite happy with it."—"Her father must miss her society very much," exclaimed Lord Mortimer.—"Tear heart, to be sure he does," cried nurse. "Well, strange things happen every day; but still I never thought what did happen would have happened, to make the poor old gentleman and his daughter part."—"What happened?" exclaimed Lord Mortimer, starting, and suddenly stopping in the middle of the room; for hitherto he had been walking backwards and forwards.—"'Twas not her business," the nurse replied, "by no manner of means, to be speaking about the affairs of her petters; put for all that, she could not help saying, because she thought it a pity his Lortship, who was so good and so affable, should remain in ignorance of every thing, that Miss Amanda was not what she appeared to be; no, if the truth was told, not the person she passed for at all: but, Lort, she would never forgive me," cried the nurse, "if your Lortship told her it was from me your Lortship heard this. Poor tear thing, she is very unwilling to have her situation known, though she is not the first poty who has met with a pad man;

and shame and sorrow be upon him who tistrest herself and her father!"

Lord Mortimer had heard enough—every doubt, every suspicion was realized; and he was equally unable and unwilling to inquire further. It was plain, Amanda was unworthy of his esteem; and to inquire into the circumstances which occasioned that unworthiness, would only have tortured him. He rung the bell abruptly, and ordering Mrs. Abergwilly to attend the Edwins, withdrew immediately to another room. Now there was an opportunity for Lord Mortimer to break with Amanda, without the smallest imputation on his honour. Did it give him pleasure?—No; it filled him with sorrow, disappointment, and anguish: the softness of her manners, even more than the beauty of her person, had fascinated his soul, and made him determine, if he found her worthy, of which indeed he had then but little doubt, to cease not till every obstacle which impeded their union should be overcome. He was inspired with indignation at the idea of the snare he imagined she had spread for him, thinking her modesty all a pretext to draw him in to make honourable proposals. As she sunk in his esteem, her charms lessened in his fancy; and he thought it would be a proper punishment for her, and a noble triumph over himself, if he conquered, or at least resisted his passion, and forsook her entirely.

Full of this idea, and influenced by resentment for her supposed deceit, he resolved, without longer delay,

lay, to fulfil the purpose which had brought him into Wales; namely, visiting his friends. But how frail are resolution and resentment, when opposed to tenderness! Without suffering himself to believe there was the least abatement of either in his mind, he forbade the carriage in a few minutes after he had ordered it, merely, he persuaded himself, for the purpose of yet more severely mortifying Amanda; as his continuing a little longer in the neighbourhood without noticing her, might perhaps convince her she was not quite so fascinating as she believed herself to be. From the time his residence at Tudor Hall was known, he had received constant invitations from the surrounding families, which, on Amanda's account, he uniformly declined: this he resolved should no longer be the case; some were yet unanswered, and these he meant to accept, as means indeed of keeping him steady in his resolution of not seeing her, and banishing her, in some degree, from his thoughts. But he could not have fixed on worse methods than these for effecting either of his purposes; the society he now mixed among was so different from that he had lately been accustomed to, that he was continually employed in drawing comparisons between them: he grew restless; his unhappiness increased; and he at last felt, that if he desired to experience any comfort, he must no longer absent himself from Amanda; and also that, if she refused to accede to the only proposals now in his power to make her, he would be miserable: so

essential did he deem her society to his happiness, so much was he attached, from the softness and sweetness of her manners. At the time he finally determined to see her again, he was in a large party at a Welch Baronet's, where he had dined ; and on the rack of impatience to put his determination in practice, he retired early, and took the road to the cottage.

Poor Amanda, during this time, was a prey to disquiet. The first day of Lord Mortimer's absence, she felt a little uneasiness ; but strove to dissipate it, by thinking business had detained him. The next morning she remained entirely at home, every moment expecting to behold him ; but this expectation was totally destroyed, when, from the outside room, she heard one of the nurse's sons tell of all the company he had met going to Sir Lewis ap Shenkin's, and amongst the rest Lord Mortimer, whose servants had told him, the day before their Lord dined at Mr. Jones's, where there was a deal of company, and a grand ball in the evening. Amanda's heart almost died within her at these words : pleasure then, not business, had prevented Lord Mortimer from coming to her—those amusements which he had so often declared were tasteless to him, from the superior delight he experienced in her society.—Either he was insincere in such expressions, or had now grown indifferent. She condemned herself for ever having permitted his visits, or received his assiduities ; she reproached him for ever having paid those

those assiduities, knowing, as he must, the insincerity or inconstancy of his nature. In spite of wounded pride, tears of sorrow and disappointment burst from her; and her only consolation was, that no one observed her. Her hours passed heavily away—she could not attend to any thing; and in the evening walked out to indulge, in a lonely ramble, the dejection of her heart. She turned from Tudor Hall, and took, without knowing it indeed, the very road which led to the house where Lord Mortimer had dined.

With slow and pensive steps she pursued her way, regardless of all around her, till an approaching footstep made her raise her eyes, and she beheld, with equal surprise and confusion, the very object who was then employing her thoughts. Obeying the impulse of pride, she hastily turned away; till recollecting that her precipitately avoiding him would at once betray her sentiments, she paused, to listen to his passionate inquiries after her health. Having answered them with involuntary coldness, she again moved on; but her progress was soon stopped by Lord Mortimer. Snatching her hand, he insisted on knowing why she appeared so desirous to avoid him? Amanda made no reply to this, but desired he would let her go.—“Never,” he exclaimed, “till you wear another face to me. Oh! did you know the pain I have suffered since last we met, you would, from pity, I am sure, treat me with less coldness.”

Amanda's heart throbbed with sudden pleasure;

but she soon silenced its emotion, by reflecting, that a declaration of uneasiness, at the very time he was entering into gaiety, had something too inconsistent in it to merit credit. Hurt by supposing he wanted to impose on her, she made yet more violent efforts to disengage her hand; but Lord Mortimer held it too firmly for her to be successful. He saw she was offended, and it gave him flattering ideas of the estimation in which he stood with her; since, to resent his neglect, was the most convincing proof he could receive of the value she set upon his attention. Without hurting her feelings by a hint that he believed the alteration in her manner was occasioned by his absence, in indirect terms he apologized for it, saying, what indeed was partly true, that a letter lately received had so ruffled his mind, he was quite unfit for her society; and had therefore availed himself of those hours of chagrin and uneasiness, to accept invitations which, at some time or other, he must have done, to avoid giving offence; and by acting as he had done, he reserved the precious moments of returning tranquillity for her he adored. Ah! how readily do we receive any apology, do we admit of any excuse that comes from a beloved object!—Amanda felt as if a weight was suddenly removed from her heart; her eyes were no longer bent to the earth, her cheek no longer pale; and a smile, the smile of innocence and love, enlivened all her features. She seemed suddenly to forget her hand was detained by Lord Mortimer, for no longer did she
attempt

attempt to free it ; she suffered him gently to draw it within his, and lead her to the favourite haunt in Tudor Grove.

Pleased, yet blushing and confused, she heard Lord Mortimer, with more energy than he had ever yet expressed himself, declare the pain he suffered the days he saw her not. From his ardent, his passionate expressions, what could the innocent Amanda infer, but that he intended, by uniting his destiny to hers, to secure to himself a society he so highly valued ? What could she infer, but that he meant immediately to speak in explicit terms ?—The idea was too pleasing to be received in tranquillity, and her whole soul felt agitated.

While they pursued their way through Tudor Grove, the sky, which had been lowering the whole day, became suddenly more darkened, and, by its increasing gloom, foretold an approaching storm. Lord Mortimer no longer opposed Amanda's returning home ; but scarcely had they turned for that purpose, ere the vivid lightning flashed across their path, and the thunder was awfully reverberated amongst the hills. The Hall was much nearer than the cottage, and Lord Mortimer, throwing his arm round Amanda's waist, hurried her to it ; but ere they reached the library, whose door was the first they came to, the rain began pouring with violence. Lord Mortimer snatched off Amanda's wet hat and cloak (the rest of her clothes were quite dry), and immediately ordered tea and coffee, as she refused

any other refreshment. He dismissed the attendants; that he might, without observation or restraint, enjoy her society. As she presided at the tea-table; his eyes, with the fondest rapture, were fastened on her face, which never had appeared more lovely; exercise had heightened the pale tint of her cheek, over which her glossy hair curled in beautiful disorder: the unusual glow gave a greater radiance to her eyes, whose soft confusion denoted the pleasure she experienced from the attention of Lord Mortimer. He restrained not, he could not restrain, the feelings of his soul. "Oh what happiness!" he exclaimed: "no wonder I found all society tasteless, after having experienced yours. Where could I find such softness, such sensibility—such sweetness, yet such animation—such beauty, yet such apparent unconsciousness of it? Oh, my Amanda, smoothly must that life glide on, whose destiny you shall share!"

Amanda endeavoured to check these transports; yet secretly they filled her with delight, for she regarded them as the sincere effusions of honourable love. Present happiness, however, could not render her forgetful of propriety. By the time tea was over, the evening began to clear, and she said she must depart. Lord Mortimer protested against this for some time longer, and at last brought her to the window, to convince her there was still a slight rain falling. He promised to see her home as soon as it was over; and entreated, in the meantime, she would gratify

gratify him with a song. Amanda did not refuse ; but the raptures he expressed while she sung, she thought too violent, and rose from the piano when she had concluded, in spite of his entreaties to the contrary. She insisted on getting her hat and cloak, which had been sent to Mrs. Abergwilly to dry. Lord Mortimer at last reluctantly went out, to obey her.

Amanda walked to the window ; the prospect from it was lovely ; the evening was now perfectly serene, a few light clouds alone floated in the sky, their lucid skirts tinged with purple rays from the declining sun ; the trees wore a brighter green, and the dewdrops, that had heightened their verdure, yet glittered on their sprays ; across a distant valley was extended a beautiful rainbow, the sacred record of Heaven's covenant with man : all nature appeared revived and animated ; the birds now warbled their closing lays, and the bleating of the cattle was heard from the neighbouring hills. " Oh, how sweet, how lovely is this dewy landscape !" exclaimed Amanda, with that delight which scenes of calm and vernal nature never fail of raising in minds of piety and tenderness.—" 'Tis lovely indeed !" repeated Lord Mortimer, who returned at the moment, assuring her the things would be sent in directly. " I admire the prospect," continued he, " because you gaze upon it with me : were you absent, like every other charm, it would lose its beauty, and become tasteless to me. Tell me," cried he, gently encir-

cling her waist, "why this hurry? why this wish to leave me? Do you expect elsewhere to meet with a being who will value your society more highly than I do? Do you expect to meet with a heart more fondly, more firmly attached to you, than mine? Oh, my Amanda, if you do, how mistaken are such expectations!" Amanda blushed, and averted her head, unable to speak. "And why," continued he, pursuing her averted eyes with his, "should we create uneasiness to ourselves, by again separating?"

Amanda looked up at these words, with involuntary surprise in her countenance. Lord Mortimer understood it; he saw she had hitherto deluded herself with thinking his intentions towards her very different from what they really were: to suffer her longer to deceive herself, would, he thought, be cruelty. Straining her to his beating heart, he imprinted a kiss on her tremulous lips, and softly told her, that the life which, without her, would lose half its charms, should be devoted to her service; and that his fortune, like his heart, should be in her possession. Trembling while she struggled to free herself from his arms, Amanda demanded what he meant? Her manner somewhat surprised and confused him; but recollecting this was the moment for explanation, he, though with half-averted eyes, declared his hopes, his wishes, and intentions. Surprise, horror, and indignation, for a few minutes overpowered Amanda; but suddenly recovering her scattered senses, with a strength greater than she had before felt,

felt, she burst from him, and attempted to rush from the room. Lord Mortimer caught hold of her : “ Whither are you going, Amanda ? ” exclaimed he, affrighted by her manner.—“ From the basest of men ! ” cried she, struggling to disengage herself.

He shut the door, and forced her back to a chair. He was shocked, amazed, and confounded by her looks : no art could have assumed such a semblance of sorrow as she now wore ; no feelings, but those of the most delicate nature, have expressed such emotion as she now betrayed. The enlivening bloom of her cheeks was fled, and succeeded by a deadly paleness ; and her soft eyes, robbed of their lustre, were bent to the ground with the deepest expression of woe. Lord Mortimer began to think he had mistaken, if not her character, her disposition ; and the idea of having insulted either purity or penitence, was like a dagger to his heart. “ Oh, my love ! ” he exclaimed, laying his hand on her trembling one, “ what do you mean by departing so abruptly ? ”—“ My meaning, my Lord,” cried she, rising, and shaking his hand from hers, “ is now as obvious as your own : I seek for ever to quit a man who, under the appearance of delicate attention, meditated so base a scheme against me. My credulity may have yielded you amusement, but it has afforded you no triumph. The tenderness which I know you think, which I shall not deny your having inspired me with, as it was excited by imaginary virtues, so it vanishes with the illusion that gave it birth :

birth: what then was innocent, would now be guilty. Oh Heavens!" continued Amanda, clasping her hands together in a sudden agony of tears, "is it I, the helpless child of sorrow, Lord Mortimer sought as a victim to illicit love? Is it the son of Lord Cherbury destined such a blow against the unfortunate Fitzalan?"

Lord Mortimer started—"Fitzalan!" repeated he: "Oh, Amanda, why did you conceal your real name? and what am I to infer from your having done so?"—"What you please, my Lord," cried she; "the opinion of a person I despise can be of little consequence to me: yet," continued she, as if suddenly recollecting herself, "that you may have no plea for extenuating your conduct, know that my name was concealed by the desire of my father, who, involved in unexpected distress, wished me to adopt another, till his affairs were settled."—"This concealment has undone me," exclaimed Lord Mortimer; "it has led me into an error I shall never cease repenting. Oh, Amanda! deign to listen to the circumstances which occasioned this error; and you will then, I am sure, think me at least less culpable than I now appear to be; you will then, perhaps, allow me to make some atonement."—"No, my Lord," cried Amanda; "willingly I will not allow myself to be deceived; for, without deceit, I am convinced you could mention no circumstance which could possibly palliate your conduct, or what you so gently term an error.—Had I, my Lord,
by

by art or coquetry, sought to attract your notice; your crime would have been palliated; but when you pursued, I retired: and the knowledge of your being Lord Cherbury's son first induced me to receive your visits. I suffered their continuance, because I thought you amiable. Sad mistake! Oh, cruel, ungenerous Mortimer, how have you abused my unsuspecting confidence!"

As she ended these words, she moved towards the door. Awed by her manner, confounded by her reproaches, tortured by remorse, and half offended at her refusing to hear his vindication, he no longer attempted to prevent her quitting the apartment: he followed her, however, from it. "What do you mean, my Lord," asked she, "by coming after me?"—"I mean to see you safely home," replied he, in a tone of proud sullenness.—"And is it Lord Mortimer," cried she, looking stedfastly in his face, "pretends to see me safe?"

He stamped, struck his hand violently against his forehead, and exclaimed, "I see, I see—I am despicable in your eyes: but, Amanda, I cannot endure your reproaches; pause for a few minutes, and you will find I am not so deserving of them as you imagine."

She made no reply, but quickened her pace. Within a few yards of the cottage, Lord Mortimer caught her with a distracted air. "Amanda," said he, "I cannot bear to part with you in this manner. You think me the veriest villain on earth: you
will

will drive me from your heart ; I shall become abhorrent to you.”—“ Most assuredly, my Lord,” replied she, in a solemn voice.—“ Cannot compunction then extenuate my error ?”—“ ’Tis not compunction, ’tis regret you feel, for finding your designs unsuccessful.”—“ No, by all that is sacred, ’tis remorse, for ever having meditated such an injury. Yet I again repeat, if you listen to me, you will find I am not so culpable as you believe. Oh, let me beseech you to do so ; let me hope that my life may be devoted to you alone ; and that I may thus have opportunities of apologizing for my conduct ! Oh, dearest Amanda !” kneeling before her, “ drive me not from you in the hour of penitence !”—“ You plead in vain, my Lord,” cried she, breaking from him.

He started in an agony from the ground, and again seized her. “ Is it thus,” he exclaimed, “ with such unfeeling coldness I am abandoned by Amanda ? I will leave you, if you only say I am not detested by you, if you only say the remembrance of the sweet hours we have spent together will not become hateful to you.”

He was pale, and trembled, and a tear wet his cheek. Amanda’s began to flow : she averted her head to hide her emotion ; but he had perceived it. “ You weep, my Amanda,” said he, “ and you feel the influence of pity.”—“ No, no,” cried she, in a voice scarcely articulate. “ I will acknowledge,” continued she, “ I believe you possessed of sensibility ;

ity ; and an anticipation of the painful feelings it will excite on the reflection of your conduct to me, now stops my further reproaches. Ah, my Lord, timely profit by mental correction ; nor ever again encourage a passion which virtue cannot sanction, or reason justify !”

“ Thus spoke the angel ;

And the grave rebuke, severe, in youthful beauty,

Added grace invincible.”

Amanda darted from Lord Mortimer, and entering the cottage, hastily closed the door. Her looks terrified the nurse, who was the only one of the family up, and who, by means of one of her sons, had discovered that Amanda had taken refuge from the thunder-storm, in Tudor Hall. Amanda had neither hat nor cloak on ; her face was pale as death ; her hair, blown by the wind, and wet from the rain, hung dishevelled about her ; and to the inquiries of her nurse, she could only answer by sobs and tears. “ Lack-a-tay !” said the nurse, “ what ails my sweet chilt ?”

Relieved by tears, Amanda told her nurse she was not very well, and that she had been reflecting on the great impropriety there was in receiving Lord Mortimer’s visits, whom she begged her nurse (if he came again) not to admit. The nurse shook her head, and said, she supposed there had been some quarrel between them ; but if Lord Mortimer had done any thing to vex her tear chilt, she would make him pay for it. Amanda charged her never to ad-
dress

dress him on such a subject ; and having made her promise not to admit him, she retired to her chamber, faint, weary, and distressed. The indignity offered her by Colonel Belgrave had insulted her purity and offended her pride ; but it had not wounded the softer feelings of her soul ; it was Mortimer alone had power to work them up to agony. The charm which had soothed her sorrows was fled ; and while she glowed with keen resentment, she wept from disappointed tenderness. “ Alas, my father ! ” she cried, “ is this the secure retreat you fondly thought you had discovered for me ? Sad mistake ! Less had I to dread from the audacious front of vice, than the insidious form of virtue : delicacy, shrinking from one, immediately announced the danger ; but innocence inspired confidence in the other ; and credulity, instead of suspicion, occupied the mind. Am I doomed to be the victim of deception ; and, except thy honest, tender heart, my father, find every other fraught with deceit and treachery ? Alas ! if, in the early season of youth, perpetual perfidy makes us relinquish candour and hope, what charms can the world retain ? The soul, sickening, recoils within itself, and no longer startles at dissolution. Belgrave aimed at my peace ; but Mortimer alone had power to pierce ‘ the vital, vulnerable heart.’ Oh, Mortimer, from you alone the blow is severe, you who, in divine language I may say, were my guide, my companion, and my familiar friend ! ”

Lord Mortimer was now a prey to all the pangs
which

which an ingenuous mind, oppressed with a consciousness of error, must ever feel : the most implacable vengeance could not devise a greater punishment for him than his own thoughts inflicted ; the empire of inordinate passion was overthrown, and honour and reason regained their full and natural ascendancy over him. When he reflected on the uniform appearance of innocence Amanda had always worn, he wondered at his weakness in ever having doubted its reality, at his audacity in ever having insulted it : when he reflected on her melancholy, he shuddered at having aggravated it. " Your sorrows, as well as purity, my Amanda," he cried, " should have rendered you a sacred object to me."

A ray of consolation darted into his mind, at the idea of prevailing on her to listen to the circumstances which had led him into a conduct so unworthy of her and himself. Such an explanation, he trusted, would regain her love and confidence, and make her accept, what he meant immediately to offer, his hand ; for pride and ambition could raise no obstacles to oppose this design of reparation—his happiness depended on its being accepted. Amanda was dearer to him than life, and hope could sketch no prospect in which she was not the foremost object. Impetuous in his passions, the lapse of the hours was insupportably tedious ; and the idea of waiting till the morning to declare his penitence, his intention, and again implore her forgiveness, filled him with agony. He went up to the cottage, and
laid

laid his hand upon the latch : he hesitated ; even from the rustics he wished to conceal his shame and confusion. All within and without the cottage was still ; the moonbeams seemed to sleep upon the thatch, and the trees were unagitated by a breeze. “ Happy rustics ! ” exclaimed Lord Mortimer — “ children of content and undeviating integrity, sleep presses sweetly on your eyelids. My Amanda too rests, for she is innocent.”

He descended to the valley, and saw a light from her window : he advanced within a few yards of it, and saw her plainly walk about with an agitated air, her handkerchief raised to her eyes, as if she wept. His feelings rose almost to frenzy at this sight, and he execrated himself for being the occasion of her tears.—The village clock struck one. Good Heavens ! how many hours must intervene, ere he could kneel before the lovely mourner, implore her soft voice to accord his pardon, and (as he flattered himself would be the case), in the fulness of reconciliation, press her to his throbbing heart, as the sweet partner of his future days ! The light was at last extinguished, but he could not rest ; and continued to wander about, like a perturbed spirit, till the day began to dawn, and he saw some early peasants coming to their labours.

CHAP. VIII.

Oh let me now, into a richer soil,
Transplant thee safe ; where vernal suns, and show'rs,
Diffuse their warmest, largest influence ;
And of my garden be the pride and joy ! THOMSON.

THE moment he thought he could see Amanda, Mortimer hastened to the cottage. The nurse, as she had promised, would not reproach him, though she strongly suspected his having done something to offend her child ; but her sullen air declared her dissatisfaction : “ Miss Fitzalan was too ill,” she said, “ to see company ;” (for Lord Mortimer had inquired for Amanda by her real name, detesting the one of Dunford, to which, in a great degree, he imputed his unfortunate conduct to her). The nurse spoke truth, in saying Amanda was ill—her agitation was too much for her frame ; and in the morning she felt so feverish, she could not rise—she had not spirits indeed to attempt it : sunk to the lowest ebb of dejection, she felt solitude alone congenial to her feelings. Hitherto the morning had been impatiently expected ; for with Mortimer she enjoyed its

“ Cool, its fragrant, and its silent hour.”

But no Mortimer was now desired. In the evening
he

he made another attempt; and finding Ellen alone, sent in a supplicatory message by her to Amanda. She was just risen, and Mrs. Edwin was making tea for her. A flush of indignation overspread her pale face, on receiving his message: "Tell him," said she, "I am astonished at his request, and never will grant it: let him seek elsewhere a heart more like his own, and trouble my repose no more."

He heard her words, and, in a fit of passion and disappointment, flew out of the house. Howell entered soon after, and heard from Ellen an account of the quarrel. A secret hope sprung in his heart at this intelligence, and he desired Ellen to meet him in about half an hour in the valley, thinking by that time he could dictate some message to send by her to Amanda.

As the parson had never paid Miss Fitzalan any of those attentions which strike a vulgar eye, and had often laughed and familiarly chatted with Ellen, she took it into her head he was an admirer of hers; and if being the object of Chip's admiration excited the envy of her neighbours, how much would that increase when the parson's predilection was known! She set about adorning herself for her appointment; and while thus employed, the honest, faithful Chip entered, attired in his holiday clothes, to escort her to a little dance.

Ellen bridled up at the first intimation of it; and, delighted with the message Amanda had sent to Lord Mortimer, which, in her opinion, was extremely eloquent,

eloquent, she resolved now to imitate it. "Timothy," said she, drawing back her head, "your request is the most improperest that can be conceived, and it is by no means convenient for me to adhere to it. I tell you, Tim," cried she, waving the corner of her white apron, for white handkerchief she had not, "I wonder at your presumptionness in making it: cease your flattering expressions of love; look out among the inferiority for a heart more like your own, and trouble my pleasure no more."

Chip paused for a moment, as if wanting to comprehend her meaning. "The short and the long of it then, Nell," said he, "is, that you and I are to have nothing more to say to each other?"—"True," cried his coquettish mistress.—"Well, well, Nell," said he, half crying, "the time may come, when you will repent having served a true-hearted lad in this manner." So saying, he ran from the house.

Ellen surveyed herself with great admiration, and expected nothing less than an immediate offer of the parson's hand. She found him punctual to his appointment; and, after walking some time about the valley, they sat down together upon a little bank. "Ellen," said he, taking her hand, "do you think there is any hope for me?"—"Nay, now intead, Mr. Howell," cried she, with affected coyness, "that is such a strange question."—"But the quarrel, perhaps," said he, "may be made up."—"No, I assure you," replied she, with quickness; "it was entirely on your account it ever took place."

place.”—“Is it possible!” exclaimed he, pleasure sparkling in his eyes; “then I may urge my passion.”—“Ah, tear now, Mr. Howell, you are so very pressing.”—“Do you think,” asked he, “she is too ill to see me?”—“Who too ill?”—“Why, Miss Fitzalan.” (From the moment Ellen knew Lord Mortimer was acquainted with Amanda’s name, she thought there was no longer reason for concealing it from any one, and had informed Howell of it.)—“Miss Fitzalan!” repeated she, staring, and changing colour.—“Yes, Ellen; the dear, lovely Miss Fitzalan, whom I adore more than language can express, or imagination conceive.”

Adieu to Ellen’s airy hopes! Her chagrin could not be concealed, and tears burst from her. The curate tenderly inquired the cause of her emotion. Though vain, she was not artful, and could not disguise it. “Why, really you made such speeches, I thought—and then you looked so. But it is no matter; I believe all men are teceitful.”

From her tears and disjointed sentences, he began to suspect something, and his gentle mind was hurt at the idea of giving her pain. Anxious, however, to receive his doom from Amanda, he again asked, if she thought he could see her? Ellen answered him snappishly, she could not tell; and hurried to the cottage, where a flood of tears soon relieved her distress. To be dressed so charmingly and for no purpose, was a pity; she therefore resolved on going to the dance, consoling herself with the old saying,

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ing, of having more than one string to her bow; and that if Chip was not as genteel, he was quite as personable a man as the curate. Walking down the lane, she met a little boy, who gave her a letter from Chip. Full of the idea of its containing some overtures for a reconciliation, she hastily broke it open, and read to the following effect:

“ ELLEN,

“ AFTER your cruelty, I could not bear to stay in the village, as I could never work another stroke with a light heart, and every tree and meadow would remind me of the love my dear girl once bore her poor Chip: so, before this comes to hand, I shall be on my way to enter one of the king's ships, and Heaven knows whether we shall ever meet again; but this I know, I shall always love Ellen, though she was so cruel to her own faithful

TIM CHIP.”

Thus did the vanity of Ellen receive a speedy punishment: her distress for some days was unabated, but at last yielded to the mild arguments of Amanda, and the hopes she inspired of seeing the wandering hero again.

Howell at last obtained an interview, and ventured to plead his passion. Amanda thanked him for his regard, but declared her inability of returning it as he wished; assuring him, however, at the same time, of her sincere friendship.—“ This then shall suf-

fice," said he: "neither sorrow nor disappointment are new to me; and when they oppress me, I will turn to the idea of my angel-friend, and forget, for some moments at least, my heavy burthen."

Lord Mortimer made several attempts for again seeing Amanda, but without success: he then wrote, but his letters were not more successful. In despair at finding neither letters nor messages received by Amanda, he at last, by stratagem, effected an interview. Meeting one of the young Edwins returning from the post-town with a letter, he inquired, and heard it was for Miss Fitzalan: a little persuasion prevailed on the young man to relinquish it, and Lord Mortimer flew directly to the cottage. "Now," cried he, "the inexorable girl must appear, if she wishes to receive her letter."

The nurse informed Amanda of it; but she, suspecting it to be a scheme, refused to appear. "By Heaven, I do not deceive her!" exclaimed Lord Mortimer; "nor will I give the letter into any hand but hers."—"This, my Lord," said Amanda, coming from her chamber, "is really cruel; but give me the letter," impatiently stretching out her hand for it.—"Another condition remains to be complied with," cried he, seizing her soft hand, which she, however, instantly withdrew; "you must read it, Miss Fitzalan, in my presence."—"Good Heavens, how you torment me!" she exclaimed.—"Do you comply then?"—"Yes," she replied, and received the letter from him.

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The pity and compunction of his Lordship increased as he gazed on her pale face, while her eyes eagerly ran over the contents of the letter, which were as follow:—

“ *TO MISS FITZALAN.*

“ To be able to communicate pleasure to my Amanda, rewards me for tedious months of wretchedness. Dry up your tears, sweet child of early sorrow, for the source of grief exists no longer: Lord Cherbury has been kind beyond my warmest expectations, and has given me the ineffable delight, as far as pecuniary matters can do, of rendering the future days of Amanda happy. In my next, I shall be more explicit; at present, I have not a moment I can call my own, which must excuse this laconic letter. The faithful Edwins will rejoice in the renewed fortune of their dear Amanda's affectionate father,

“ *AUGUSTUS FITZALAN.*

“ *Jermyn-street, &c. &c.*”

The emotions of Amanda were irrepressible: the letter dropped from her trembling hand, and her streaming eyes were raised to Heaven: “ Oh bless him!” she exclaimed; “ gracious Heaven, bless the benefactor of my father, for this good deed! May sorrow or misfortune never come across his path!” —“ And who, may I ask,” said Lord Mortimer, “ merits so sweet a prayer from Amanda?”—

"See," cried she, presenting him the letter, as if happy at the moment to have such a proof of the truth of what she had alledged to him.

Lord Mortimer was affected by the letter; his eyes filled with tears, and he turned aside to hide his emotion. Recovering himself, he again approached her: "And while you so sweetly pray for the felicity of the father," said he, "are you resolved on dooming the son to despair? If sincere penitence can extenuate error, and merit mercy, I deserve to be forgiven."

Amanda rose, as if with an intention of retiring, but Lord Mortimer caught her hand: "Think not," cried he, "I will lose the present opportunity, which I have so long desired, and with such difficulty obtained, of entering into a vindication of my conduct. However it may be received by you, it is a justice I owe my own character to make; for as I never wilfully injured innocence, so I cannot bear to be considered as its violator. Amidst the wildness, the extravagance of youth, which with compunction I acknowledge being too often led into, my heart still acquitted me of ever committing an act which could entail upon me the pangs of conscience: sacred to me has virtue ever been, how lowly soever in situation."

The idea of his being able to vindicate himself scarcely afforded less pleasure to Amanda than it did to Lord Mortimer. She suffered him to reseate her, while he related the circumstances which had
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led him astray in his opinion of her. Oh ! how fervent was the rapture that pervaded Amanda's heart, when, as she listened to him, she found he was still the amiable, the generous, the noble character, her fancy had first conceived him to be ! Tears of pleasure, exquisite as those she had lately shed, again fell from her ; for oh, what delight is there in knowing that an object we cannot help loving, we may still esteem ! " Thus," continued Lord Mortimer, " have I accounted for my error, an error which, except on account of your displeasure, I know not whether I should regret, as it has convinced me more forcibly than any other circumstance could have done, of the perfections of your mind ; and has, besides, removed from mine prejudices, which, causelessly, I did not entertain against your sex. Was every woman, in a similar situation, to act like you,

————— ' Such numbers would not in vain

Of broken vows and faithless men complain.'

To call you mine, is the height of my wishes : on your decision I rest for happiness. Oh, my Amanda, let it be a favourable decision ! and suffer me to write to Mr. Fitzalan, and request him to bestow on me the greatest treasure one being could possibly receive from another—a woman lovely, and educated as you have been !"

When he mentioned appealing to her father, Amanda could no longer doubt the sincerity of his intentions : her own heart pleaded as powerfully as his solicitations did, for pardoning him ; and if she

did not absolutely extend her hand, she at least suffered it to be taken, without any reluctance. "I am forgiven then," said Lord Mortimer, pressing her to his bosom: "Oh, my Amanda! years of tender attention can never make up for this goodness!"

When his transports were a little abated, he insisted on writing immediately to Fitzalan. As he sealed the letter, he told Amanda he had requested an expeditious answer. The happiness of the youthful pair was communicated to the honest rustics, whom Lord Mortimer liberally rewarded for their fidelity to his Amanda, and whom she readily excused for their ambiguous expressions to him, knowing they proceeded from simplicity of heart, and a wish of serving her; yet without injuring themselves, by betraying the manner in which they had procured intelligence of her situation.

The day after the reconciliation, Lord Mortimer told Amanda he was compelled, for a short time, to leave her—with what reluctance, he hoped, he said, she could readily conceive: but the visit, which he had come into Wales for the purpose of paying, had been so long deferred, his friend was growing impatient, and threatened to come to Tudor Hall, to see what detained him there. To prevent such a measure, which he knew would be a total interruption to the happiness he enjoyed in her society, Lord Mortimer added, he meant to pass a few days with him, hoping, by the time he returned, there would be a letter from Mr. Fitzalan, which would authorize
his

his immediate preparations for their nuptials.— Amanda wished, but could not totally hide the uneasiness she felt at the prospect of a separation: the idea, however, of his speedy return, rendered it but transient; and he departed in a few hours after he had mentioned his intention.

Amanda had never before experienced such happiness as she now enjoyed; she now saw herself on the point of being elevated to a situation, by a man too she adored, which would give her ample opportunities of serving the dearest connexions of her heart, and of gratifying the benevolence of her disposition and the elegance of her taste. Oh, how delightful to think she should be able to sooth the declining period of her father's life, by providing for him all the requisite indulgences of age! Oh, how delightful to think she should be accessary to her dear Oscar's promotion! How rapturous to imagine, at her approach the drooping children of misery would brighten with pleasing presages of relief, which she should amply realize! Such were Amanda's anticipations of what she termed the blessings of an affluent fortune; felicity, in her opinion, was to be diffused, to be enjoyed. Of Lord Cherbury's sanction to the attachment of his son, she entertained not a doubt: her birth was little inferior to his, and fortune was entirely out of the question; for a liberal mind, she thought, could never look to that, when, on one side, was already possessed more than sufficient for even the luxuries of life. Such

were the ideas of the innocent and romantic Amanda, ideas which made her seem to tread on air, and which she entertained, till subsequent experience convinced her of their fallacy.

CHAP. IX.

Alas! the story melts away my soul!

That best of fathers—how shall I discharge

The gratitude and duty which I owe him?

By laying up his counsels in your heart. CARO.

AMANDA was sitting in the recess in the garden, the fourth evening of Lord Mortimer's absence, when suddenly she heard the rattling of a carriage: her heart bounded, and she flew into the house; at the very moment a chaise stopped at the door, from which, to her inexpressible amazement, her father descended.

Transfixed to the spot, it was many minutes ere she had power to bid him welcome, or return the fond caresses he bestowed upon her. "I am come, Amanda," said he, eagerly interrupting the joyful speeches of the Edwins, "to take you away with me; and one hour is all I can give you to prepare yourself."—"Good Heaven!" said Amanda, starting; "to take me away immediately!"—"Immediately," he repeated; "and as I know you are at-
tached

tached to this good girl," turning to Ellen, "I shall be happy, if her parents permit, to procure her attendance for you."

The Edwins, who would have followed themselves, or allowed any of their family to follow Fitzalan and his daughter round the world, gladly consented to her going; and the girl, exclusive of her attachment to Amanda, which was very great, having pined ever since her lover's departure, rejoiced at the idea of a change of scene.

Not so Amanda—it made her suffer agony: to be torn from Lord Mortimer in the hour of reconciliation and explanation, was more than she could support with fortitude. Her father, perhaps, had not received his letter; it was but justice then to him and Lord Mortimer, to reveal her situation. She left her trunk half-packed, and went out for that purpose; but as she stood before him with quivering lips and half-averted eyes, at a loss to begin, he took her hand, and softly exclaimed, "My love, let us, for the present, wave every subject; the moments are precious: hasten to put on your habit, or we shall be too late at the stage where I propose resting to-night."

Amanda turned in silence to her chamber, to comply with his desire; tears ran down her cheeks, and for the first time she conceived the idea of being hurried away to avoid Lord Mortimer; but why she could not think. Honour as well as tenderness, she thought, demanded her acquainting him with the

cause of her precipitate journey; but when she took up a pen for that purpose, her hand was unsteady, and she was so much disturbed by the nurse and her daughters, who ran backwards and forwards in all the bustle of preparation, that she could not write. Her father prevented a second effort, for he was continually coming to her chamber-door, urging her to be quick; and by thus watching, completely prevented her delivering any message to the nurse for Lord Mortimer. So great was his eagerness to depart; he would not suffer the horses to be taken from the chaise, or any refreshment to be brought him by the Edwins, notwithstanding their pressing entreaties; neither would he answer to their interrogatories as to where he was going, saying, they should know hereafter.

The parting embrace was at last given, and received with a heavy heart. Amanda was handed into the carriage; silence prevailed; all the travellers were equally, though differently affected. The cottage, and the spire of the village church, had awakened the most affecting remembrances in the mind of Fitzalan, and tears fell from him to the memory of his unfortunate Malvina; sighs burst from Amanda, as she viewed the white turrets of Tudor Hall; and Ellen sobbed, on passing the forsaken cottage of poor Chip. From all these affecting and beloved objects, the rapidity of the carriage soon conveyed them; but the impressions they left upon their minds were not easily eradicated. Fitzalan was
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the first to break the unsocial silence; and it seemed as if he did so, for the purpose of rousing the dejection of his daughter. A cross-road from the cottage shortly brought them to Conway Ferry, which they were obliged to pass; and here, had Amanda's mind been at ease, she would have felt truly gratified by viewing the remains of Gothic magnificence which Castle Conway exhibited: as it was, she could not behold them unmoved; and whilst she admired, gave the passing tribute of a sigh to grandeur in decay. They only continued at Conway till a carriage was provided for them, and soon came beneath the stupendous projections of Penmaenmawr. This was a scene as new as awful to Amanda. "Well, Cot in heaven bless their souls!" said Ellen; "what a tefl of a way they should be in, if one of them huge stones rolled down upon the carriage!" They stopped not again till they reached Bangor Ferry, where they were to rest for the night. Amanda's strength and spirits were now so entirely exhausted, that, had not a glass of wine been immediately procured her, she would have fainted from weakness: this a little revived her; and the tears she shed relieved, in some degree, the oppression of her heart. Her father left her and Ellen together, while he went to give directions about the journey of the ensuing day.

Amanda went to the window, and threw up the sash; the air from the mountains she thought refreshed her. The darkness of the hour was opposed by a bright moon, which cast a trembling radiance



upon the water, and by its partial gleams, exhibited a beautiful scene of light and shade, that, had Amanda been in another frame of mind, she would infinitely have admired : the scene, too, was almost as still as it was lovely ; for no sound was heard, except a low murmur of voices below stairs. While she stood here in a deep reverie, the paddling of oars suddenly roused her, and she beheld a boat on the opposite shore, which, in a few minutes, gained the one where she was ; and she saw coming from it to the inn, a large party of gentlemen, whose air and attendants announced them to be men of fashion—they seemed, by their discourse, to be a convivial party. The light was too dim to allow their faces to be discerned ; but, in the figure of one, Amanda thought she perceived a strong resemblance to Lord Mortimer. Her heart throbbed ; she leaned forward to endeavour to distinguish more plainly, and at the moment, heard his well-known voice ordering his groom to have the horses ready at twelve o'clock, as he would take the advantage of such fine weather to set off, at that hour, for Tudor Hall. The party were then ushered into a room contiguous to the one occupied by Amanda, while the bustling of the waiters, and the clattering of knives, forks, and plates, announced the preparations for a late dinner. Oh, what was now the agitation of Amanda, to think that, in one moment, she could inform Lord Mortimer of her situation !—But the transport the idea gave was relinquished almost as soon as felt, as
such .

such a measure, she thought, might perhaps for ever disoblige her father. In this tumult of doubt and perplexity he found her; and by his conduct convinced her, that he not only knew of Lord Mortimer's being in the house, but wished her to avoid him; for he instantly led her from the window, and, shutting it down, darted, for the first time in his life, a severe frown at her. A dagger in the breast of Amanda could scarcely have given her more pain; a cold horror ran through her veins, and she was oppressed by as many fears as if she had been conscious of offending him. The supper he had ordered was a little retarded by the late dinner of his gay neighbours: he would have had it in another room, had another been disengaged. Vainly did his timid companions try to eat; Amanda was sick, and Ellen frightened, though she knew not why: the waiter was dismissed, and the most unsocial silence prevailed.

Unbounded gaiety reigned in the next apartment, from which every sound could plainly be distinguished. Dinner over, the exhilarating juice went round, and bumper toasts were called. Lord Mortimer at last was asked for a fair nymph. "I will give you," exclaimed he, in a voice which denoted his being uncommonly elevated, "an angel!"—Amanda's heart beat violently, and her cheeks glowed.—"A name for this celestial beauty," demanded one of the party.—"Amanda," cried his Lordship.—"Oh faith, Mortimer, that wont do," said another
of

of his companions; "this angel shall not pass without the rest of her name."—"Miss Fitzalan, then," exclaimed his Lordship.—"Oh, oh!" cried a new voice, with a loud laugh, after due honour had been paid to the toast, "I begin to unravel a mystery: upon my soul, I could not conceive, till this instant, what had kept you so long at the Hall; for I had seen the maiden part of the household, and knew the metal there not very attractive; but this Amanda, I suppose, is the rosy daughter of some poor curate in its vicinity, who for——"

"Beware," interrupted Lord Mortimer, in an agitated voice, "of what you say; give me no reason to repent having introduced a name so valued into this company. The situation of Miss Fitzalan is not exactly what you suppose; but let this suffice for you to know, it is such as secures her from every species of impertinence; and was it even less protected, her own elegance and propriety would elevate her above receiving any."

The face of Fitzalan, during this conversation, was crimsoned over, and he again darted a frown at the trembling Amanda, which almost petrified her. He told her that she and Ellen must retire immediately to rest, as they had a long journey before them the ensuing day, which would require their rising early. Amanda, for the first time in her life, wished to be relieved from his presence, and gladly rose to obey him: he attended her himself to the room prepared for her, which was directly over that where

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the gentlemen sat. To think of rest was impossible; the severity of her father's looks, and her precipitate journey she knew not whither, but evidently for the purpose of avoiding Lord Mortimer, filled the thoughts of Amanda with confusion and distress. Ellen essayed artless consolation: "What the devil!—Do you think," said she, "if I was to go down to give his Lordship an intimation of your being here, you could easily contrive to see him in the garden? or else we could bring him up here; and if the Captain surprised us, we could pop him in a moment behind the curtain." Amanda motioned her to silence, unwilling to lose the smallest sound of Lord Mortimer's voice; and determined, anxious as she was to see him, never to act in opposition to her father.

At length the horses were led from the stable, and the convivial party descended to them. Amanda softly raised the window, and saw Lord Mortimer eagerly vault upon the saddle: he gave a hasty adieu to his friends, and galloped off; they mounted at the same time, but took a contrary direction. Amanda leaned out till she could no longer hear the clattering of the horses' hoofs; her heart sunk, as the sound died upon her ear; she wept, as she retired from the window—the idea of Mortimer's disappointment aggravated her grief; she no longer opposed Ellen's efforts to undress her. Exhausted by fatigue, sleep soon closed her eyes, and fancy again transported her to Tudor Hall and Mortimer.

By the first dawn of day, a knock at her chamber-door

ber-door roused her from this pleasing illusion, and she heard her father desiring her to rise immediately. Drowsy as she was, she instantly obeyed the summons; and awakening Ellen, they were ready to attend him in a few minutes: a boat was already prepared, and on gaining the opposite side, they found a carriage in waiting. Day was now just dawning; a grey mist enveloped the mountains, and cast a shade of obscurity upon all the inferior objects: at length the atmosphere began to brighten, the lucid clouds in the east were tinged with golden radiance, and the sun in beautiful and refulgent majesty arose, gladdening the face of Nature with potent beams; the trees, the shrubs, seemed waving their dewy heads, in sign of grateful homage, while their winged inhabitants, as they soared in the air, poured forth the softest notes of melody.

Amanda, in spite of sadness, beheld the charming scene with admiration, and Fitzalan contemplated it with delight. "All nature," he exclaimed, "points out to man the gratitude due to the divine Dispenser of good; hardened must that heart be against the feelings of sensibility, which the harmony and fragrance of this early hour awaken not to a perfect sense of it!" Amanda assented more by a smile than words, for she was ill able to speak, to his remark. They stopped not till they reached Gwintey, where they breakfasted; and then proceeded, without resting again, to Holyhead, which place Fitzalan announced as they entered it: and now Amanda

first

first conceived the idea of being brought to another kingdom, which her father soon confirmed her in ; for as soon as they alighted, he inquired when a packet would sail ? and heard, with evident pleasure, about six in the afternoon. He directly desired three passages to be engaged ; and having ordered an early dinner, dismissed Ellen into another room ; and seating himself by Amanda, he took her hand, and with a tender voice thus addressed her :—“ To give pain to your gentle heart, has inflicted torture on mine ; but honour compelled me to the conduct which I have adopted, and which, I trust and believe, Amanda will excuse when she knows my motive for it, which in due order she shall hear.—On Lord Cherbury’s arrival in town, I was immediately informed of it, according to the promise of his domestics, and directly sent him my letter. Scarcely had he read it, ere, with all the ardour of real friendship, he came and brought me to his house, where we might securely reflect on what was to be done. His Lordship soon formed a plan, that at once inspired me with gratitude and pleasure, as it promised me a competence, without depriving me of independence : this was, to accept the agency of a considerable estate in the north of Ireland, which he possesses in right of his wife, the late Countess of Cherbury, who was an Irish heiress. He proposed my residing in the mansion-house, offering to advance a sum sufficient to answer all demands and exigencies ; and striving to lighten the obligations he conferred

conferred upon me, by declaring he had long been seeking a man of well-known probity, as his last agent had gone off considerably in arrears with him. I accepted his generous offer, and soon freed myself from the power of Belgrave. I now felt a tranquillity I was long a stranger to; and was busied in preparing to come down to you, when Lord Mortimer's letter, like a clap of thunder, broke the happy calm. I enjoyed. Gracious Heaven! I shuddered to think that, at the very period Lord Cherbury was building up my fortunes, the hopes he entertained for his darling son were in a way of being destroyed, through means of a connexion of mine. He had hinted to me his having already settled upon a splendid alliance for Lord Mortimer, which he also hinted his heart was set on. This the infatuated young man himself had some knowledge of; for, in his rash letter, he entreated my secrecy relative to his proposal for you, till beyond the reach of mortals to separate you. No doubt he would never have asked my consent, had he thought he could have procured you without it: he took me, I suppose, for some needy and ambitious creature, who would, though at the expence of integrity, grasp an opportunity of elevating a child to rank and fortune; but never was an erring mortal more mistaken. Though dearer to me than the air I breathe, though the lovely child of my lost Malvina, though a cherubim, whose innocent endearments often raised in me, as Prospero says,

‘ An undergoing stomach, to bear up
Against what should ensue,’

I would rather see you breathless at my feet, than, by conscious and apparent meanness, deserve and incur the malevolence of calumny. I committed the letter to the flames, and requested Lord Cherbury's final commands; being desirous to commence my journey without longer delay, as your delicate state of health, I said, made me anxious to have you immediately under my own care. He complied with my request, and I travelled post, resolved to separate you and Lord Mortimer, even if prepared for the altar: nor was I alone actuated to this by gratitude to Lord Cherbury, or consideration for my own honour; no, with these a regard for your peace equally influenced me; a soul of sensibility and refinement like yours, could never, I knew, be happy, if treated with repulsive coldness by the family of her husband, particularly if her conscience told her she merited that coldness by entering it clandestinely. Could I bear to think that you, so lovely in person, so amiable in manners, so illustrious in descent, should be called an artful and necessitous contriver—an imputation which, most undoubtedly, your union with Lord Mortimer would have incurred? No; to the God who gave you to my care, I hold myself responsible, as far as in my power, for preserving your peace; to the mother, whose last words implored my tenderness for her offspring, I hold myself accountable: to me she still exists; I think her
ever

ever near ; and, ere I act, always reflect whether such an action would meet her approbation. Such is the respect virtue excites—it lives when the frail texture of mortality is dissolved. Your attachment, when repelled by reason and fortitude, will soon vanish. As for Lord Mortimer, removed from the flame which warmed his heart, he will soon forget it ever played around it: should he, however, be daring enough to persevere, he will find my resolution unalterable. Honour is the only hereditary possession that ever came to me uninjured ; to preserve it in the same state, has been ever my unremitting study : it irradiated the gloomy morning of care, and I trust it will gild the setting hours of existence.”

Amanda's emotions deprived her of speech or action : she sat a pale statue, listening to her father's firm and rapid language, which announced the abolition of her hopes. Ignorant of her inability to speak, he felt hurt at her silence ; and, rising abruptly, walked about the room with a disordered air. “ I see, I see,” cried he, at last, looking mournfully upon her, “ I am destined to be unhappy : the little treasure which remained from the wreck of felicity, I had hoped (vain hope !) would have comforted and consoled me for what then was lost.”—“ Oh, my father !” exclaimed Amanda, suddenly starting and sighing deeply, “ how you pierce my heart !” His pale emaciated looks seemed to declare him sinking beneath a burthen of care. She started up, and flung herself into his arms. “ Dearest, best of fathers !”

she.

She exclaimed, in a voice broken by sobs, "what is all the world to me, in comparison of you? Shall I put Lord Mortimer, so lately a stranger, in competition with your happiness?—Oh, no! I will henceforth try to regulate every impulse of my heart according to your wishes." Fitzalan burst into tears; the enthusiasm of Virtue warmed them both. Hallowed are her raptures, and amply do they recompense the pain attendant on her sacrifices!

Dinner was brought in, to which they sat down in their usual social manner; and Amanda, happy in her father's smiles, felt a ray of returning cheerfulness. The evening was delightfully serene when they went on board; and the vessel, with a gentle motion, glided over the glittering waves. Sickness soon compelled Amanda and Ellen to retire from the deck; yet, without a sigh, the former could not relinquish the receding prospect of the Welch mountains. By the dawn of next morning, the vessel entered the Bay of Dublin; and Fitzalan, shortly after, brought Amanda from the cabin, to contemplate a scene which far surpassed all her ideas of sublimity and beauty, a scene which the rising sun soon heightened to the most glowing radiance. They landed at the Marine Hotel, where they breakfasted; and then proceeded in a carriage to an hotel in Capel-street, where they proposed staying a few days, for the purpose of enjoying Oscar's company, whose regiment was quartered in Dublin, and making some requisite purchases for their journey to the north. As the carriage

carriage drove down Capel-street, Amanda saw a young officer standing at the corner of Mary's Abbey, whose air very much resembled Oscar's: her heart palpitated; she looked out, and perceived the resemblance was a just one, for it was Oscar himself. The carriage passed too swiftly for him to recognise her face; but he was astonished to see a fair hand waving to him. He walked down the street, and reached the hotel just as they were entering it.

CHAP. X.

And whence, unhappy youth! he cried,

The sorrows of thy breast?

GOLDENITH.

THE raptures of this meeting surpassed description—to Oscar they were heightened by surprise: he was unfortunately that day on guard at the Bank, therefore could only pay them a few short and stolen visits; but the next morning, the moment he was relieved, he came to them. Fitzalan had given Amanda money to purchase whatever she deemed necessary for her convenience and amusement, and Oscar attended her to the most celebrated shops to make her purchases. Having supplied herself with a pretty fashionable assortment for her wardrobe, she procured a small collection of books, sufficient, however, from their excellence, to form a little library

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In themselves, and every requisite for drawing ; nor did she forget the little wants and vanities of Ellen. They returned about dinner-time to the hotel, where they found their father, who had been transacting business for Lord Cherbury, in different parts of the town. We may now suppose him in the possession of happiness, blessed as he was in the society of his children and the certainty of a competence ; but, alas ! happiness has almost ever an attendant drawback ; and he now experienced one of the most corroding kind, from the alteration he witnessed in his son. Oscar was improved in his person, but his eyes no longer beamed with animation, and the rose upon his cheek was pale ; his cheerfulness no longer appeared spontaneous, but constrained, as if assumed for the purpose of veiling deep and heartfelt sorrow.

Fitzalan, with all the anxiety and tenderness of a parent, delicately expressed his wish of learning the source of his uneasiness, that, by so doing, he might be better qualified to alleviate it ; hinting at the same time, in indirect terms, that, if occasioned by any of the imprudences which youth is sometimes inadvertently led into, he would readily excuse them, from a certainty that he who repented never would again commit them. Oscar started from the remotest hint of divulging his uneasiness : he begged his father, however, to believe (since he had unfortunately perceived it), that it was not derived from imprudence ; he pretended to say it was but a slight chagrin, which would soon wear away of itself, if not renewed by inquiries.

inquiries. Fitzalan, however, was too much affected by the subject, to drop it as readily as Oscar wished. After regarding him for a few minutes, with an attention as mournful as fixed (while they sat round the table after dinner), he suddenly exclaimed—“Alas! my dear boy, I fear things are worse within than you will allow.”—“Now indeed, Oscar,” cried Amanda, sweetly smiling on him, anxious to relieve him from the embarrassment these words had involved him in, and to dissipate the deep gloom of her father’s brow, “though never in the wars, I fancy you are not quite heart-whole.” He answered her with affected gaiety; but, as if wishing to change the discourse, suddenly spoke of Colonel Belgrave, who at present, he said, was absent from the regiment. Occupied by his own feelings, he observed not the glow which mantled the cheeks of his father and sister at that name.

“You know Mrs. Belgrave?” said Amanda, endeavouring to regain composure.—“Know her!” repeated he, with an involuntary sigh; “Oh yes!” Then, after a pause of a few minutes, turning to his father, “I believe I have already informed you, Sir,” said he, “that she is the daughter of your brave old friend, General Honeywood, who, I assure you, paid me no little attention on your account: his house is quite the temple of hospitality, and she is the little presiding goddess.”—“She is happy, I hope?” said Amanda.—“Oh surely!” replied Oscar, little thinking of the secret motive his sister had for asking

asking such a question ; “ she possesses what the world thinks necessary to constitute felicity.”

Fitzalan had accounted to his son for leaving Devonshire, by saying the air had disagreed with Amanda. He told him of the friendship of Lord Cherbury, from whom, he said, he trusted shortly to be able to have him promoted : “ Be assured, my dear Oscar,” he cried, “ most willingly would I relinquish many of the comforts of life, to attain the ability of hastening your advancement, or adding to your happiness.”—“ My happiness !” Oscar mournfully repeated. Tears filled his eyes—he could no longer restrain them ; and, starting up, hurried to a window. Amanda followed, unutterably affected at his emotion : “ Oscar, my dear Oscar,” said she, as she flung her arms round his neck, “ you distress me beyond expression !” He sat down, and leaning his head on her bosom as she stood before him, his tears fell through her handkerchief.

“ Oh Heavens !” exclaimed Fitzalan, clasping his hands together, “ what a sight is this ! Oh, my children, from your felicity alone could I ever derive any ! If the hope I entertained of that felicity is disappointed, the heart which cherished it must soon be silent.” He arose, and went to them. “ Yet,” continued he, “ amidst the anguish of this moment, I feel a ray of pleasure, at perceiving an affection so strong and tender between you ; it will be a mutual consolation and support, when the feeble help and protection I can give are finally removed.

“ VOL. I. H

moved. Oh then, my Oscar," he proceeded, while he folded their united hands in his, "become the soothing friend and guardian of this dear, this amiable, this too lovely girl; let her not too severely feel, too bitterly mourn, the loss of an unhappy father!"

Amanda's tears began to stream, and Oscar's, for a few minutes, were increased: "Excuse me," at last he said, making an effort to exert himself, to his father; "and be assured, to the utmost of my ability I will ever obey your wishes, and fulfil your expectations. I am ashamed of the weakness I have betrayed—I will yield to it no more; forget, therefore, your having seen it, or at least remember it without pain, as I solemnly assure you, no effort on my part shall be untried to conquer it entirely; and now let the short time we have to continue together be devoted to cheerfulness."

Soon after this, he mentioned Parker's performance in Marlborough Green; and proposed, as it was now the hour, taking Amanda there. The proposal was not objected to; and Ellen, who, they knew, would particularly delight in such an amusement, was committed to the care of Oscar's servant, a smart young soldier, who escorted her with much gallantry. The Green was extremely crowded, particularly by officers, whose wandering glances were soon attracted to Amanda, as one of the most elegant girls present. Oscar was soon surrounded by them, and compelled not only to gratify their curiosity,

sity, by discovering who she was, but their gallantry, by introducing them to her. Their compliments soon diverted her attention from the exhibition; and Ellen, who sat behind her on a bench, afforded incessant mirth by her remarks—"Pless her soul and poty too!" she said; "it was the most comical and wonderfulest sight she had ever seen in her porn tays!" A string of red-coats would have attended Amanda to the hotel, had not Oscar prevented it.

The next day was devoted to visiting the public buildings, the Park, and a few of the most beautiful places in its vicinage. On the ensuing morn, Fitzalan and Amanda continued their journey to the North, where Oscar assured them he expected leave to visit them the following summer, after the reviews were over. As he helped his sister into the carriage, she put a pocket-book into his hand (given by her father for that purpose), which contained something to replenish his purse.

Ere we attend the travellers, or rather while they are journeying along, we shall endeavour to account for the dejection of Oscar.

CHAP. XI.

From the loud camp retir'd, and noisy court,
In honourable ease and rural sport,
The remnant of his days he safely past;
Nor found they lagg'd too slow, nor flew too fast.
He made his wish with his estate comply,
Joyful to live, yet not afraid to die.
One child he had—a daughter, chaste and fair,
His age's comfort, and his fortune's heir. PRIOR.

OSCAR's regiment, on his first joining it in Ireland, was quartered in Enniskillen. The corps was agreeable, and the inhabitants of the town hospitable and polite. He felt all the delight of a young and enterprising mind, at entering, to what appeared to him, the road to glory and pleasure: many of his idle mornings were spent in rambling about the country, sometimes accompanied by a party of officers, and sometimes alone.

In one of his solitary excursions along the beautiful banks of Lough Erne, with a light fusee on his shoulder (as the woods, that almost descended to the very edge of the water, abounded in game), after proceeding a few miles, he felt quite exhausted by the heat, which, as it was now the middle of summer, was intense. At a little distance he perceived an
orchard,

orchard, whose glowing apples promised a delightful repast. Knowing that the fruit, in many of the neighbouring places, was kept for sale, he resolved on trying if any was to be purchased here; and accordingly opened a small gate, and ascended, through a grass-grown path in the orchard, to a very plain white cottage, which stood upon a gently sloping lawn, surrounded by a rude paling. He knocked against the door with his fusee, and immediately a little rosy girl appeared. "Tell me, my pretty lass," cried he, "whether I can purchase any of the fine apples I see here?"—"Anan!" exclaimed the girl, with a foolish stare. Oscar glancing, at the moment, into the passage, saw, from a half-closed door, nearly opposite the one at which he stood, a beautiful fair face peeping out. He involuntarily started, and, pushing aside the girl, made a step into the passage. The room-door directly opened, and an elderly woman, of a genteel figure and pleasing countenance, appeared. "Good Heaven!" cried Oscar, taking off his hat, and retreating; "I fear I have been guilty of the highest impertinence! The only apology I can offer for it is, by saying it was not intentional. I am quite a stranger here, and having been informed most of the orchards hereabouts contained fruit for sale, I intruded under that idea."—"Your mistake, Sir," she replied, with a benevolent smile, "is too trifling to require an apology; nor shall it be attended with any disappointment to you."

She then politely shewed him into the parlour, where, with equal pleasure and admiration, he contemplated the fair being, of whom before he had but a transient glance. She appeared to be scarcely seventeen; and was, both as to face and figure, what a painter would have chosen to copy for the portrait of a little playful Hebe: though below even the middle size, she was formed with the nicest symmetry; her skin was of a dazzling fairness, and so transparent, that the veins were clearly discernible: the softest blush of Nature shaded her beautifully rounded cheeks: her mouth was small and pouting; and, whenever she smiled, a thousand graces sported round it: her eyes were full, and of a heavenly blue—soft, yet animated; giving, like the expression of her whole countenance, at once an idea of innocence, spirit, and sensibility: her hair, of the palest and most glossy brown, hung carelessly about her; and, though dressed in a loose morning-gown of muslin, she possessed an air of fashion, and even consequence. The easy manner in which she bore the looks of Oscar, proclaimed her at once not unaccustomed to admiration, nor displeased with that she now received: for that Oscar admired her, could not but be visible; and he sometimes fancied he saw an arch smile playing over her features, at the involuntary glances he directed towards her.

A fine basket of apples, and some delicious cider, was brought to Oscar; and he found his entertainer as hospitable in disposition as ~~she was~~ ~~pleasing~~ in conversation.—

conversation.—The beautiful interior of the cottage by no means corresponded with the plainness of the exterior: the furniture was elegantly neat, and the room ornamented with a variety of fine prints and landscapes. A large folding glass-door opened from it into a pleasure-garden.

Adela, so was the charming young stranger called, chatted in the most lively and familiar terms; and at last, running over to the basket, threw the apples all about the table, and picking out the finest, presented them to Oscar. It is scarcely necessary to say, he received them with emotion. But how transient is all sublunary bliss! A cuckoo-clock, over Oscar's head, by striking three, reminded him that he had passed near two hours in the cottage. "Oh Heavens!" cried he, starting, "I have made a most unconscionable intrusion! You see, my dear ladies," bowing respectfully to both, "the consequence of being too polite, and too fascinating." He repeated his thanks in the most animated manner; and, snatching up his hat, departed, yet not without casting

"One longing, lingering look behind."

The sound of footsteps after him on the lawn, made him turn, and he perceived the ladies had followed him thither. He stopped again to speak to them, and extolled the lovely prospect they had, from that eminence, of the lake, and its scattered islands. "I presume," said Adela, handling the fusée on which he leaned, "you were trying your

success to-day in fowling?"—"Yes; but, as you may perceive, I have been unsuccessful."—"Then, I assure you," said she, with an arch smile, "there is choice game to be found in our woods."—"Delicious game indeed!" cried he, interpreting the archness of her look, and animated by it to touch her hand; "but only tantalizing to a keen sportsman, who sees it elevated above his reach."—"Come, come," exclaimed the old lady, with a sudden gravity, "we are detaining the gentleman."

She took her fair companion by the arm, and hastily returned to the cottage. Oscar gazed after them a moment, then, with a half-smothered sigh, descended to the road. He could not help thinking the incident of the morning very like the novel adventures he had sometimes read to his sister Amanda, as she sat at work; "and, to complete the resemblance," thought he, "I must fall in love with the little heroine.—Ah, Oscar! beware of such imprudence; guard your heart with all your care against tender impressions, till Fortune has been more propitious to you." Thus would my father speak," mused Oscar, "and set his own misfortunes in terrible array before me, were he now present. Well, I must endeavour to act as if he were here to exhort me.—Heigh-ho!" proceeded he, shouldering his fusee. "Glory, for some time to come, must be my mistress."

The next morning the fusee was again taken down, and he sallied out, carefully avoiding the officers, lest
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any of them should offer to accompany him ; for he felt a strange reluctance to their participating either the smiles of Adela, or the apples of the old lady. Upon his arrival at the orchard, finding the gate open, he advanced a few steps up the path, and had a glimpse of the cottage ; but no object was visible. Oscar was too modest to attempt entering it uninvited ; he therefore turned back, yet often cast a look behind him ; no one, however, was to be seen. He now began to feel the heat oppressive, and himself fatigued with his walk, and sat down upon a moss-covered stone, on the margin of the lake, at a little distance from the cottage, beneath the spreading branches of a hawthorn : his hat and fusée were laid at his feet, and a cool breeze from the water refreshed him : upon its smooth surface a number of boats and small sail vessels were now gliding about in various directions, and enlivening the enchanting prospect, which was spread upon the bosom of the lake. From contemplating it, he was suddenly roused by the warble of a female voice : he started, turned, and beheld Adela just by him. " Bless me ! " cried she, " who would have thought of seeing you here ? Why, you look quite fatigued, and, I believe, want apples to-day as much as you did yesterday." Then, sitting down on the seat he had resigned, she tossed off her bonnet, declaring it was insupportably warm, and began rummaging a small work-bag she held on her arm. Oscar snatching the bonnet from the ground, Adela flung apples into

it, observing, it would make an excellent basket.— He sat down at her feet, and never, perhaps, felt such a variety of emotions, as at the present moment; his cheeks glowed with a brighter colour, and his eyes were raised to hers with the most ardent admiration; yet not to them alone could he confine the expression of his feelings—they broke in half-formed sentences from his lips; which Adela heard with the most perfect composure, desiring him either to eat, or pocket his apples quickly, as she wanted her bonnet, being in a great hurry to return to the cottage, from which she had made a kind of stolen march. The apples were instantly committed to his pocket, and he was permitted to tie on the bonnet. A depraved man might have misinterpreted the gaiety of Adela; or at least endeavoured to take advantage of it; but the sacred impression of virtue, which Nature and education had stamped upon the heart of Oscar, was indelibly fixed; and he neither suspected, nor, for worlds, would have attempted injuring the innocence of Adela: he beheld her (in what indeed was a true light) as a little playful nymph, whose actions were the offspring of innocence.

“I assure you,” exclaimed she, rising, “I am very loth to quit this pleasant seat; but, if I make a much longer delay, I shall find the lady of the cottage in anxious expectation.”—“May I advance?” said Oscar, as he pushed open the gate for her.—“If you do,” replied she, “the least that will be said from seeing us together is, that we were

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in search of each other the whole of the morning.” —“ Well,” cried Oscar, laughing at this careless speech, “ and if they do say so, it would not be doing me injustice.” —“ Adieu, adieu !” said she, waving her hand ; “ not another word for a kingdom !”

What a compound of beauty and giddiness it is ! thought Oscar, watching her till she entered the cottage. As he returned from the sweet spot, he met some labourers, from whom he inquired concerning its owner, and learned she was a respectable widow-lady, of the name of Marlowe.

On Oscar's return to Enniskillen, he heard from the officers that General Honeywood, an old veteran, who had a fine estate about fourteen miles from the town, was that morning to pay his compliments to them ; and that cards had been left for a grand *fête* and ball, which he annually gave on the 1st of July, to commemorate one of the glorious victories of King William. Every person of any fashion in and about the neighbourhood was, on such occasions, sure of an invitation ; and the officers were pleased with theirs, as they had, for some time, wished for an opportunity of seeing the General's daughter, who was very much admired.

The General, like a true veteran, retained an enthusiastic attachment to the profession of arms, to which not only the morning, but the meridian of his life, had been devoted, and which he had not quitted till compelled by a debilitated constitution. Seated

in his paternal mansion, he began to experience the want of a faithful companion, who would heighten the enjoyments of the tranquil hour, and sooth the infirmities of age. This want was soon supplied by his union with a young lady in the neighbourhood, whose only dowry was innocence and beauty. From the great disparity of their ages, it was concluded she had married for convenience; but the tenor of her conduct changed this opinion, by proving the General possessed her tenderest affections. A happy couple were not known; but this happiness was terminated, as suddenly as fatally, by her death, which happened two years after the birth of her daughter—All the General's love was then centered in her child. Many of the ladies in the neighbourhood, induced by the well-known felicity his lady had enjoyed, or by the largeness of his fortune, made attempts to engage him again in matrimonial toils; but he fought shy of them all, solemnly declaring he would never bring a stepmother over his dear girl. In her infancy, she was his plaything, and, as she grew up, his comfort: caressed, flattered, adored from her childhood, she scarcely knew the meaning of harshness and contradiction: a naturally sweet disposition, and the superintending care of an excellent woman, prevented any pernicious effects from such excessive indulgence as she received: to disguise or duplicity she was a perfect stranger; her own feelings were never concealed, and others she supposed equally sincere in revealing theirs.

theirs. True, the open avowal of her regard or contempt often incurred the imputation of imprudence; but, had she even heard it, she would have only laughed at it; for the General declared whatever she said was right, and her own heart assured her of the innocence of her intentions. As she grew up, the house again became the seat of gaiety: the General, though very infirm, felt his convivial spirit revive; he delighted in the society of his friends, and could still

“Shoulder his crutch, and shew how fields were won.”

Oscar, actuated by an impulse which, if he could, he at least did not strive to account for, continued daily to parade before the orchard, but without again seeing Adela.

At length the day for General Honeywood's entertainment arrived, and the officers, accompanied by a large party, set off early for Woodlawn, the name of the General's seat. It was situated on the borders of the lake, where they found barges waiting to convey them to a small island, which was the scene of the morning's amusement. The breakfast was laid out amidst the ruins of an ancient building, which, from the venerable remains of its Gothic elegance, was most probably, in the days of religious enthusiasm, the seat of sacred piety. The old trees, in groups, formed a thick canopy over head, and the ivy that crept along the walls, filled up many of the niches where the windows had formerly been; those that still remained open, by descending to the ground, afforded

afforded a most enchanting prospect of the lake. The long succession of arches which composed the body of the chapel, were, in many places, covered with creeping moss, and scattered over with wall-flowers, blue hair-bells, and other spontaneous productions of nature; while between them were placed seats and breakfast-tables, ornamented in a fanciful manner.

The officers experienced a most agreeable surprise on entering: but how inferior were their feelings to the sensations which Oscar felt, when introduced with the party by the General to his daughter, he beheld, in Miss Honeywood, the lovely Adela! She seemed to enjoy his surprise; and Mrs. Marlowe, from the opposite side of the table, beckoned him to her with an arch look. He flew round, and she made room for him by herself. "Well, my friend," cried she, "do you think you shall find the General's fruit as tempting as mine?"—"Ah!" exclaimed Oscar, half sighing, half smiling, "Hesperian fruit, I fear, which I never can hope to obtain!"

Adela's attention, during breakfast, was too much engrossed by the company to allow her to notice Oscar more than by a few hasty words and smiles. There being no dancing till the evening, the company, after breakfast, dispersed according to their various inclinations.

The island was diversified with little acclivities, and scattered over with wild shrubs, which embalmed the air. Temporary arbours of laurel, intermingled
with

with lilies, were erected, and laid out with fruits, ices, and other refreshments: upon the edge of the water; a marquee was pitched for the regimental band, which Colonel Belgrave had politely complimented the General with: a flag was hoisted on it, and, upon a low eminence, a few small field-pieces were mounted: attendants were every where dispersed, dressed in white streamers, ornamented with a profusion of orange-coloured ribbons: the boatmen were dressed in the same livery; and the barges, in which several of the party went to visit the other islands, made a picturesque appearance, with their gay streamers fluttering in the breeze. The music, now softly dying away upon the water, now gradually swelling on the breeze, and echoed back by the neighbouring hills, added to the pleasures of the scene.

Oscar followed the footsteps of Adela; but, at the very moment in which he saw her disengaged from a large party, the General hallooed to him from a shady bank on which he sat. Oscar could not refuse the summons; and as he approached, the General, extending his hand, gave him a cordial squeeze, and welcomed him, as the son of a brave man he had once intimately known. "I recollected the name of Fitzalan," said he, "the moment I heard it mentioned; and had the happiness of learning from Colonel Belgrave, I was not mistaken in believing you to be the son of my old friend." He now made several inquiries concerning Fitzalan; and the affectionate

tionate manner in which he mentioned him, was truly pleasing to Oscar: he had once, he said, saved his life, at the imminent hazard of his own; and it was an obligation, while that life remained, he could not forget.

Like Don Guzman in Gil Blas, the General delighted in fighting over his battles; and now proceeded to enumerate many incidents which happened during the American war, when he and Fitzalan served in the same regiment. Oscar could have well dispensed with such an enumeration; but the General, who had no idea that he was not as much delighted in listening as he was in speaking, still went on. Adela had been watching them some time; her patience at length, like Oscar's, being exhausted, she ran forward and told her father, he must not detain him another minute, for they were going upon the lake; "and you know, papa," said she, "against we come back, you may have all your battles arranged in proper form; though, by the bye, I don't think it is the business of an old soldier to intimidate a young one with such dreadful tales of iron wars." The General called her saucy baggage, kissed her with rapture, and saw her trip off with his young friend, who seized the favourable opportunity to engage her for the first set in the evening.

About four, the company assembled in the abbey to dinner: the band played during the repast, the toasts were proclaimed by the sound of the trumpet, and answered by an immediate discharge from the mount.

mount. At six, the ladies returned to Woodlawn, to change their dresses for the ball; and now

“Awful beauty put on all its charms.”

Tea and coffee were served in the respective rooms; and, by eleven, the ball-room was completely crowded with company, at once brilliant and lively, particularly the gentlemen, who were not a little elevated by the General's potent libations to the glorious memory of him whose victory they were celebrating.

Adela, adorned in a style superior to what Oscar had yet seen, appeared more lovely than he had even at first thought her: her dress, which was of thin muslin spangled, was so contrived as to give a kind of ærial lightness to her figure. Oscar reminded her of the promise of the morning, at the very moment the Colonel approached for the purpose of engaging her. She instantly informed him of her engagement to Mr. Fitzalan.—“Mr. Fitzalan!” repeated the Colonel, with the haughty air of a man who thought he had reason to be offended; “he has been rather precipitate indeed: but, though we may envy, who shall wonder at his anxiety to engage Miss Honeywood?”

Dancing now commenced, and the elegant figure of Adela never appeared to greater advantage. The transported General watched every movement; and, “Incomparable, by Jove!—What a sweet angel she is!” were expressions of admiration which involuntarily broke from him, in the pride and fondness of his heart. Oscar too, whose figure was remarkably
fine,

fine, shared his admiration ; and he declared to Colonel Belgrave, he did not think the world could produce such another couple. This assertion was by no means pleasing to the Colonel : he possessed as much vanity, perhaps, as ever fell to the share of a young belle, conscious of perfections ; and detested the idea of having any competitor, at least such a powerful one as Oscar, in the good graces of the ladies.

Adela, having concluded the dance, complained of fatigue, and retired to an alcove, whither Oscar followed her. The window commanded a view of the lake, the little island, and the ruined abbey : the moon, in full splendor, cast her silvery light over all those objects, giving a softness to the landscape, even more pleasing than the glowing charms it had derived from the radiancy of day.

Adela, in dancing, had dropped the bandeau from her hair ; Oscar took it up, and still retained it. Adela now stretched forth her hand to take it. " Allow me," cried he, gently taking her hand, " to keep it ; to-morrow you would cast it away as a trifle, but I would treasure it as a relic of inestimable value : let me have some memento of the charming hours I have passed to-day."—" Oh, a truce," said Adela, " with such expressions !" who did not, however, oppose his putting her bandeau in his bosom ; " they are quite commonplace, and have already been repeated to hundreds, and will again, I make no doubt."—" This is your opinion ?"—

" Yes,

"Yes, really."—"Oh, would to Heaven," exclaimed Oscar, "I durst convince you how mistaken a one it is!"—Adela, laughing, assured him that would be a difficult matter. Oscar grew pensive: "I think," cried he, "if oppressed by misfortune, I should, of all places on earth, like a seclusion in the old abbey."—"Why really," said Adela, "it is tolerably calculated for a hermitage; and if you take a solitary whim, I beg I may be apprized of it in time, as I should receive peculiar pleasure in preparing your 'mossy couch and frugal fare.'"—"The reason for my liking it," replied he, "would be the prospect I should have from it of Woodlawn."—"And does Woodlawn," asked Adela, "contain such particular charms, as to render a view of it so very delightful?"

"At this moment they were summoned to call a new dance, a summons perhaps not agreeable to either, as it interrupted an interesting *tête-à-tête*. The Colonel engaged Adela for the next set; and, though Oscar had no longer an inclination to dance, to avoid particularity, he stood up, and with a young lady who was esteemed extremely handsome. Adela, as if fatigued, no longer moved with animation, and suddenly interrupted the Colonel in a gallant speech he was making her, to inquire if he thought Miss O'Neal, Oscar's partner, pretty—so very pretty as she was generally thought?

The Colonel was too keen not to discover at once the motive which suggested this inquiry: "Why, faith,"

faith," cried he, after examining Miss O'Neal some minutes through an opera-glass, "the girl has charms, but so totally eclipsed at present," looking languishingly at Adela, "in my eyes, that I cannot do them the justice they may perhaps merit: Fitzalan, however, by the homage he pays her, seems as if he would make up for the deficiency of every other person." — Adela turned pale, and took the first opportunity of demanding her bandeau from Oscar. He, smiling, refused it; declaring it was a trophy of the happiness he enjoyed that day; and that the General should have informed her, a soldier never relinquished such a glorious memento. — "Resign mine," replied Adela, "and procure one from Miss O'Neal!" — "No!" cried he; "I would not pay her charms and my own sincerity so bad a compliment, as to ask what I should not in the least degree value." Adela's spirits revived, and she repeated her request no more.

The dance continued after supper, with little intermission, till seven, when the company repaired to the saloon to breakfast, after which they dispersed. The General particularly and affectionately bade Oscar farewell, and charged him to consider Woodlawn as his head-quarters: "Be assured," said the good-natured old man, "the son of my brave, worthy, and long-respected friend, will ever be valuable to my heart, and welcome to my home; and would to Heaven, in the calm evening of life, your father and I had pitched our tents nearer each other!"

From this period, Oscar became almost an inmate of his house; and the General shortly grew so attached to him, that he felt unhappy if deprived of his society. The attentions he received from Oscar were such as an affectionate son would pay a tender father: he supported his venerable friend whenever he attempted to walk, attended him in all the excursions he made about his domain, read to him when he wanted to be lulled asleep, and listened, without betraying any symptoms of fatigue, to his long and often truly tiresome stories of former battles and campaigns. In paying these attentions, Oscar obeyed the dictates of gratitude and esteem, and also gratified a benevolent disposition, happy in being able

“To rock the cradle of declining age.”

But his time was not so entirely engrossed by the General, as to prevent his having many hours to devote to Adela: with her he alternately conversed, read, and sung; rambled with her through romantic paths, or rode along the beautiful borders of Lough Erne; was almost her constant escort to all the parties she went to in the neighbourhood; and frequently accompanied her to the hovels of wretchedness, where the woes which extorted the soft tear of commiseration, he saw amply relieved by her generous hand. Admiring her as he did before, how impossible was it for Oscar, in those dangerous *tête-à-têtes*, to resist the progress of a tender passion?—a passion, however, confined, as far at least as silence could confine it, to his own heart. The confidence which

he

he thought the General reposed in him, by allowing such an intercourse with his daughter, was too sacred, in his estimation, to be abused; but, though his honour resisted, his health yielded to his feelings.

Adela, from delighting in company, suddenly took a pensive turn; she declined the constant society she had hitherto kept up, and seemed, in a solitary ramble with Oscar, to enjoy more pleasure than the gayest party appeared to afford her. The favourite spot they visited almost every evening, was a path on the margin of the lake, at the foot of a woody mountain: here, often seated, they viewed the sun sinking behind the opposite hills; and while they enjoyed the benignancy of his departing beams, beheld him tinge the trembling waves with gold and purple: the low whistle of the ploughman returning to his humble cottage, the plaintive carol of birds from the adjacent grove, and the low bleating of cattle from pastures which swelled above the water—all these, by giving the softest and most pleasing charms of nature to the hour, contrived to touch yet more sensibly hearts already prepossessed in favour of each other. Adela would sometimes sing a little simple air, and, carelessly leaning on the arm of Oscar, appear to enjoy perfect felicity. Not so poor Oscar—the feelings of his soul, at these moments, trembled on his lips, and to repress them was agony.

An incident soon occurred, which endeared him yet more to the General. Driving one day in a low phaeton, along a road cut over a mountain, the horses,

horses, frightened by a sudden firing from the lake, began rearing in the most frightful manner. The carriage stood near a tremendous precipice, and the servants, appalled by terror, had not power to move. Oscar saw that nothing but an effort of desperate resolution could keep them from destruction : he leaped out, and rushing before the horses, seized their heads, at the imminent hazard of being tumbled down the precipice, on whose very verge he stood. The servants, a little relieved from their terror, hastened to his assistance ; the traces were cut, and the poor General, whose infirmities had weakened his spirits, conveyed home in almost a state of insensibility. Adela, perceiving him from her dressing-room window, flew down, and learning his danger, fell upon his neck, in an agony of mingled joy and terror. Her caresses soon revived him ; and as he returned them, his eyes eagerly sought his deliverer. Oscar stood near, with mingled tenderness and anxiety in his looks. The General took his hand, and whilst he pressed it, along with Adela's, to his bosom, tears fell on them : " You are both my children," he exclaimed, " the children of my love, and from your felicity I must derive mine."

This expression Oscar conceived to be a mere effusion of gratitude, little thinking what a project, relative to him, had entered the General's head, who had first, however, consulted and learned from his daughter, it would be agreeable to her. This generous, some will say romantic, old man, felt for

Oscar

Oscar the most unbounded love and gratitude ; and as the best proof of both, he resolved to bestow on this young soldier his rich and lovely heiress, who had acknowledged to her father her predilection for him. He knew his birth to be noble, his disposition amiable, and his spirit brave ; besides, by this union, he should secure the society of Adela. He wished her married, yet dreaded, whenever that event took place, he should be deprived of her ; but Oscar, he supposed, bound to him by gratitude, would, unlike others, accede to his wishes of residing at Woodlawn during his lifetime. His project he resolved on communicating to Colonel Belgrave, whom, on Oscar's account, he regarded ; as Oscar had said, what indeed he believed, that he was partly indebted to him for his commission.

What a thunderstroke was this to Belgrave, who arrived at Woodlawn the morning after the resolution was finally settled, and was asked to accompany the General, about a little business, to the summer-house in the garden ! Poor Oscar trembled—he felt a presentiment he should be the subject of discourse ; and had no doubt but the General meant to complain to Colonel Belgrave, as a person who had some authority over him, about his great particularity to Miss Honeywood.

Rage, envy, and surprise, kept the Colonel silent some minutes after the General had ended speaking ; dissimulation then came to his aid, and he attempted, though in faltering accents, to express his admiration
of

of such generosity : " Yet to bestow such a treasure, so inestimable, on such a man, when so many of equal rank and fortune sighed for its possession—upon a man too, or rather a boy, from whose age it might be expected his affections would be variable !" —" Let me tell you, Colonel," said the General, hastily interrupting him, and striking his stick upon the ground, as he rose to return to the house, " there can be little danger of his affections changing, when such a girl as Adela is his wife ; so touch no more upon that subject, I entreat you. But you must break the affair to the young fellow ; for I should be in such a confounded flurry, I should set all in confusion, and beat an alarm at the first onset."

The gloom and embarrassment which appeared in the countenance of the Colonel, filled Oscar with alarms—he imagined them excited by friendship for him. After what the General had said, he sighed to hear particulars, and longed, for the first time, to quit Woodlawn. The Colonel was indeed in a state of torture : he had long meditated the conquest of Adela, whose fortune and beauty rendered her a truly desirable object : to resign her without one effort of circumventing Oscar, was not to be thought of ; to blast his promised joys, even if it did not lead to the accomplishment of his own wishes, he felt would give him some comfort, and he resolved to leave no means untried for doing so.

They set off early in the morning for Enniskillen ;

and Belgrave sent his servant on before them, that there might be no restraint on the conversation he found Oscar inclined to begin.

CHAP. XII.

SINCERITY,

Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave
Thy onward path, although the earth should gape,
And from the gulf of hell Destruction cry,
To take dissimulation's winding way.

DOUGLAS.

“WELL, Colonel,” said Oscar, “I fancy I was not mistaken in thinking the General wanted to speak with you concerning me : I am convinced you will not conceal any particulars of a conversation it may be essential to my honour to hear.”—“Why, faith,” cried the Colonel, delighted to commence his operations, “he was making a kind of complaint about you : though he acknowledges you a brave lad, yet, hang him, he has not generosity enough to reward that bravery with his daughter, or any of his treasures.”—“Heaven is my witness,” exclaimed the unsuspecting Oscar, “I never aspired to either ! I always knew my passion for his daughter as hopeless as fervent, and my esteem for him as disinterested as sincere : I would have sooner died than abused the confidence he reposed in me, by revealing my attachment.

tachment. I see, however, in future, I must be an exile from Woodlawn."—"Not so, neither," replied the Colonel; "only avoid such particularity to the girl. I believe, on my soul, she has more pride than susceptibility in her nature; in your next visit, therefore, which, for that purpose, I would have you soon make, declare, in a cavalier manner, your affections being engaged previous to your coming to Ireland: this declaration will set all to rights with the General—he will no longer dread you on his daughter's account; you will be as welcome as ever to Woodlawn, and enjoy, during your continuance in the country, the society you have hitherto been accustomed to."—"No," said Oscar; "I cannot assert so great a falsehood."—"How ridiculous!" replied the Colonel. "For Heaven's sake, my dear boy, drop such romantic notions: I should be the last man in the world to desire you to invent a falsehood which could injure any one; but no priest in Christendom would blame me for this."—"And suppose I venture it, what will it do, but bind faster round my heart chains already too galling, and destroy, in the end, all remains of peace?"—"Faith, Fitzalan," said the Colonel, "by the time you have had a few more love-affairs with some of the pretty girls of this kingdom, you will talk no more in this way. Consider (and be not too scrupulous) how disagreeable it will be to resign the General's friendship, and the pleasing society you enjoy at Woodlawn; besides, it will appear strange to those who

knew your former intimacy. In honour, too, you are bound to do as I desire you ; for, should the girl have been imprudent enough to conceive an attachment for you, this will certainly remove it ; for pride would not allow its continuance, after hearing of a favourite rival, and the General will be essentially served.”—“ My dear Colonel,” said Oscar, his eyes suddenly sparkling, “ do you think she has been imprudent enough to conceive a partiality for me ? ”—“ I am sure,” said the Colonel, “ that is a question I cannot possibly answer ; but, to give my opinion, I think, from her gay unembarrassed manner, she has not.”—“ I suppose not indeed,” cried Oscar, mournfully sighing : “ why then should I be guilty of a falsehood for a person who is already indifferent to me ? ”—“ I have told you my reason,” replied the Colonel coldly ; “ do as you please.”

They were now both silent ; but the conversation was soon renewed, and many arguments passed on both sides. Oscar's heart secretly favoured the Colonel's plan, as it promised the indulgence of Adela's society ; to be an exile from Woodlawn, was insupportable to his thoughts ; reason yielded to the vehemence of passion, and he at last fell into the snare the perfidious Belgrave had spread ; thus, by a deviation from truth, forfeiting the blessings a bounteous Providence had prepared for him. Oh, never let the child of integrity be seduced from the plain and un-deviating path of sincerity ! Oh, never let him hope, by illicit means, to attain a real pleasure ! The hope
of

of attaining any good through such means, will, like a meteor of the night, allure but to deceive.

Soon after his fatal promise to the Colonel, a self-devoted victim, he accompanied him to Woodlawn. On their arrival, Miss Honeywood was in the garden, and Oscar, trembling, went to seek her. He found her sitting in a flower-woven arbour—

“Herself the fairest flower.”

Never had she looked more lovely; the natural bloom of her cheeks was heightened by the heat, and glowed beneath the careless curls that fell over them; and her eyes, the moment she beheld Oscar, beamed with the softest tenderness, the most bewitching sensibility. “My dear, dear Fitzalan,” cried she, throwing aside the book she had been reading, and extending her hand, “I am glad to see you; I hope you are come to take up your residence for some time at Woodlawn.”—“You hope!” repeated Oscar mournfully.—“I do indeed. But, bless me, what is the matter? You look so pale and thin, you appear but the shadow of yourself; or rather like a despairing shepherd, ready to hang himself on the first willow-tree he meets.”—“I am indeed unhappy,” cried Oscar; “nor will you wonder at my being so, when I acknowledge, I, at this present time, feel a passion which I must believe hopeless.”—“Hopeless! Well, now, I insist on being your confidant; and then,” smiling somewhat archly, “I shall see what reason you have to despair.”—

“Agreed,” exclaimed Oscar; “and now to my

story." Then pausing a minute, he started up, "No," continued he, "I find it impossible to tell it; let this dear, this inestimable object," drawing a miniature of his sister from his bosom, "speak for me, and declare, whether he who loves such a being, can ever lose that love, or help being wretched at knowing it is without hope."

Adela snatched it hastily from him, and, by a sudden start, betrayed her surprise; words indeed are inadequate to express her heart-rending emotions, as she contemplated the beautiful countenance of her imaginary rival. And was Oscar then, that Oscar whom she adored, whose happiness she had hoped to constitute, whose fortune she delighted to think she should advance, really attached to another? Alas! too true he was: of the reality of the circumstance she held a convincing proof in her hand. She examined the picture again and again, and, in its mild beauties, thought she beheld a striking superiority to the charms she herself possessed: the roses forsook her cheeks, a mist overspread her eyes, and, with a shivering horror, she dropped it from her hand.—Oscar had quitted the harbour, to conceal his agonies. "Well," said he, now returning with forced calmness, "is it not worthy of inspiring the passion I feel?" Unable to answer him, she could only point to the place where it lay, and hastened to the house. "Sweet image," cried Oscar, taking it from the ground, "what an unworthy purpose have I made you answer!—Alas, all is now over!

Adela,

Adela, my Adela, is lost for ever!—Lost! Ah Heavens, had I ever hopes of possessing her?—Oh no! to such happiness never did I dare look forward.”

Adela, on reaching the parlour which opened into the garden, found her father there. “Ah, you little baggage, do I not deserve a kiss for not disturbing your *tête-à-tête*? Where is that young rogue Fitzalan?”—“I beg, I entreat, Sir,” said Adela, whose tears could no longer be restrained, “you will never mention him again to me; too much has already been said about him.”—“Nay, prithee, my little girl,” exclaimed the General, regarding her with surprise, “cease thy sighs and tears, and tell me what’s the matter.”—“I am hurt,” replied she, in a voice scarcely articulate, “that so much has been said about Mr. Fitzalan, whom I can never regard in any other light than that of a common acquaintance.”

The Colonel, who had purposely lingered about the wood, now entered. Adela started, and precipitately retreated through another door. “Faith, my dear Colonel,” said the General, “I am glad you are come; the boy and girl have had a little skirmish, but, like other love quarrels, I suppose it will soon be made up; so let me know how the lad bore the announcement of his good fortune.”—“It fills a rational mind with regret,” exclaimed the Colonel, seating himself gravely, and inwardly rejoicing at the success of his stratagem, “to find such a fa-

talities prevalent among mankind, as makes them reject a proffered good, and sigh for that which is unattainable; like wayward children, neglecting their sports to pursue a rainbow, and weeping as the airy pageant mocks their grasp.”—“Very true indeed,” said the General; “very excellent, upon my word: I doubt if the chaplain of a regiment ever delivered such a pretty piece of morality. But, dear Colonel,” laying his hand on his knee, “what did the boy say?”—“I am sorry, Sir,” he replied, “that what I have just said is so applicable to him: he acknowledged the lady’s merit, extolled her generosity, but pleaded a prior attachment against accepting your offer, which even one more exalted would not tempt him to forego, though he knows not whether he will ever succeed in it.”—“The devil he did!” exclaimed the General, as soon as rage and surprise would allow him to speak: “The little impertinent puppy! the ungrateful young dog!—A prior attachment!—reject my girl, my Adela, who has had such suitors already!—So, I suppose, I shall have the whole affair blazed about the country; I shall hear from every quarter how my daughter was refused: and by whom? Why, by a little Ensign, whose whole fortune lies in his sword-knot. A fine game I have played truly! But if the jack-anapes opens his lips about the matter, may powder be my poison if I do not trim his jacket for him!”—“Dear General,” said the Colonel, “you may depend on his honour: but, even supposing he did mention

mention the affair, surely you should know it would not be in his power to injure Miss Honeywood; amiable, accomplished, in short, possessed, as she is, of every perfection, I know men, at least one man, of consequence, both from birth and fortune; who has long sighed for her, and who would, if he received the least encouragement, openly avow his sentiments."—"Well," cried the General, still panting for breath, "we will talk about him at some future time; for I am resolved on soon having my little girl married, and to her own liking too."

Oscar and Adela did not appear till dinner-time: both had been endeavouring to regain composure; but poor Oscar had been far less successful than Adela in the attempt: not that she loved less, far indeed was this from being the case—her passion for him was of the tenderest nature; she had flattered herself with having inspired one equally ardent in his breast, which, sanctioned by her father, she thought would have constituted the felicity of their lives; and looked forward, with a generous delight, to the period when she should render her beloved Fitzalan prosperous and independent. The disappointment she experienced, as the first she had ever met, sat heavy on her heart; and the gay visions of youth were, in one moment, clouded by melancholy: but her pride was as great as her sensibility; and as its powerful impulse pervaded her mind, she resolved to afford Oscar no triumph, by letting him witness her dejection: she therefore wiped away all traces

of tears from her eyes, checked the vain sigh that struggled at her heart, and dressed herself with as much attention as ever. Her heavy eyes, her colourless cheeks, however, denoted her feelings: she tried, as she sat at table, to appear cheerful, but in vain; and on the removal of the cloth immediately retired, as no ladies were present.

The General was a stranger to dissimulation; and as he no longer felt, he no longer treated Oscar with his usual kindness. When, pale, trembling, and disordered, he appeared before him, he received him with a stern frown, and an air scarcely complaisant. This increased the agitation of Oscar—every feeling of his soul was in commotion: he was no longer the life of their company—their happiness and mirth formed a striking contrast to his misery and dejection; he felt a forlorn wretch, a mere child of sorrow and dependance. Scalding tears dropped from him, as he bent over his plate: he could have cursed himself for such weakness—fortunately it was unnoticed. In losing the General's attention, he seemed to lose that of his guests: his situation grew too irksome to be borne; he rose unregarded, and a secret impulse led him to the drawing-room. Here Adela, oppressed by the dejection of her spirits, had flung herself upon a couch, and gradually sunk into a slumber. Oscar stepped lightly forward, and gazed on her, with a tenderness as exquisite as a mother would have felt in viewing her sleeping babe. Her cheek, which rested on her fair hand, was tinged with

with a blush, by the reflection of a crimson curtain through which the sun darted, and the traces of a tear were yet discernible upon it. "Never," cried Oscar, with folded hands, as he hung over the interesting figure, "never may any tear, except that of soft sensibility for the woes of others, bedew the cheek of Adela! Perfect as her goodness, be her felicity! May every blessing she now enjoys be rendered permanent by that Power who smiles benignly upon innocence like hers!—Oh Adela! he who now prays for your felicity, never will lose your idea—he will cherish it in his heart, to meliorate his sorrows; and from the dreary path which may be appointed for him to tread, sometimes look back to happier scenes!"

Adela began to stir; she murmured out some inarticulate words; and suddenly rising from the couch, beheld the motionless form of Fitzalan. Haughtily regarding him, she asked the meaning of such an intrusion?—"I did not mean indeed to intrude," said he; "but, when I came and found you, can you wonder at my being fascinated to the spot?" The plaintive tone of his voice sunk deep into Adela's heart; she sighed heavily, and turning away, seated herself in a window. Oscar followed; he forgot the character he had assumed in the morning, and gently seizing her hand, pressed it to his bosom. At this critical minute, when mutual sympathy appeared on the point of triumphing over duplicity, the door opened, and Colonel Belgrave appeared.

peared. From the instant of Oscar's departure, he had been on thorns to follow him, fearful of the consequences of a *tête-à-tête*, and was attended by the rest of the gentlemen.

Oscar was determined on not staying another night at Woodlawn: and declared his intention, by asking Colonel Belgrave if he had any commands for Ennis-killen, whither he meant to return immediately?—"Why, hang it, boy," cried the General, in a rough grumbling voice, "since you have staid so long, you may as well stay the night; the clouds look heavy over the lake, and threaten a storm."—"No, Sir," said Oscar, colouring, and speaking in the agitation of his heart; "the raging of a tempest would not make me stay."

Adela sighed, but pride prevented her speaking. Fitzalan approached her: "Miss Honeywood," said he: he stopped, his voice was quite stifled. Adela, equally unable to speak, could only encourage him to proceed, by a cold glance.—"Lest I should not," resumed he, "have the happiness of again visiting Woodlawn, I cannot neglect this opportunity of assuring you, that the attention, the obligations I have received in it, never can be forgotten by me! and that the severest pang my heart could possibly experience, would result from thinking I lost any part of the friendship you and the General honoured me with."

Adela bent her head; and Oscar, seeing that she either would not, or could not speak, bowed to the
General,

General, and hurried from the room. The tears he had painfully suppressed, gushed forth; and, at the bottom of the stairs, he leaned against the banisters for support. While he cast his eyes around, as if bidding a melancholy farewell to the scene of former happiness, a hasty footstep advanced. He started, and was precipitately retreating, when the voice of the butler stopped him: this was an old veteran, much attached to Oscar, and his usual attendant in all his fowling and fishing parties. As he waited at tea, he heard Oscar's declaration of departing with surprise, and followed him, for the purpose of expressing that and his concern. "Why, Lord now, Mr. Fitzalan," cried he, "what do you mean by leaving us so oddly? But if you are so positive about going to Enniskillen to-night, let me order Standard to be prepared for you."

Oscar for some time had had the command of the stables; but knowing, as he did, that he had lost the General's favour, he could no longer think of taking those liberties which kindness had once invited him to: he wrung the hand of his humble friend, and snatching his hat from the hall-table, darted out of the house. He ran till he came to the mountain-path, on the margin of the lake. "Never," cried he, distractedly striking his breast, "shall I see her here again! Oh, never, never, my beloved Adela, shall your unfortunate Fitzalan wander with you through those enchanting scenes! Oh, how transient was this gleam of felicity!"

Exhausted

Exhausted by the violence of his feelings, he fell into a kind of torpid state, against the side of the mountain. The shadows of night were thickened by a coming storm; a cold blast howled amongst the hills, and agitated the gloomy waters of the lake; the rain, accompanied by sleet, began to fall; but the tempest raged unregarded around the child of sorrow, the wanderer of the night! Adela alone,

“ Heard, felt, or seen,”

pervaded every thought. Some fishermen approaching to secure their boats, drove him from this situation, and he flew to the wood which screened one side of the house. By the time he reached it, the storm had abated; and the moon, with a watery lustre, breaking through the clouds, rendered, by her feeble rays, the surrounding and beloved scenes just visible. Adela's chamber looked into the wood; and the light from it rivetted Oscar to a spot exactly opposite the window. “ My Adela!” he exclaimed, extending his arms, as if she could have heard, and flown into them; then, dejectedly dropping them— “ She thinks not on such a forlorn wretch as me! Oh, what comfort to lay my poor distracted head for one moment on her soft bosom, and hear her sweet voice speak pity to my tormented heart!” Sinking with weakness, from the conflicts of his mind, he sought an old roofless root-house, in the center of the wood, where he and Adela had often sat. “ Well,” said he, as he flung himself upon the damp ground, “ many a brave fellow has had a

Worse

worse bed; but God particularly protects the unsheltered head of the soldier, and the afflicted." The twittering of the birds roused him from an uneasy slumber, or rather lethargy, into which he had fallen; and starting up, he hastened to the road, fearful, as day was beginning to dawn, of being seen by any of General Honeywood's workmen. It was late ere he arrived at Enniskillen; and before he gained his room, he was met by some of the officers, who viewed him with evident astonishment: his regimentals were quite spoiled; his fine hair, from which the rain had washed all the powder, hung dishevelled about his shoulders; the feather of his hat was broken; and the disorder of his countenance was not less suspicious than that of his dress. To their inquiries he stammered out something of a fall, and extricated himself with difficulty from them.

In an obscure village, fifteen miles from Enniskillen, a detachment of the regiment lay. The officer who commanded it disliked his situation extremely; but company being irksome to Oscar, it was just such a one as he desired, and he obtained leave to relieve him. The agitation of his mind, aided by the effects of the storm he had been exposed to, was too much for his constitution: immediately on arriving at his new quarters, he was seized with a violent fever, an officer was obliged to be sent to do duty in his place, and it was long ere any symptoms appeared, which could flatter those who attended him with hopes of his recovery. When able to sit

up,

up, he was ordered to return to Enniskillen, where he could be immediately under the care of the regimental surgeon. Oscar's servant accompanied him in the carriage; and as it drove slowly along, he was agreeably surprised by a view of Mrs. Marlowe's orchard. He could not resist the wish of seeing her, and making inquiries relative to the inhabitants of Woodlawn; for with Mrs. Marlowe, I should previously say, he had not only formed an intimacy, but a sincere friendship. She was a woman of the most pleasing manners; and to her superintending care, Adela was indebted for many of the graces she possessed, and at her cottage passed many delightful hours with Oscar.

The evening was far advanced when Oscar reached the orchard; and leaning on his servant, slowly walked up the hill. Had a spectre appeared before the old lady, she could not have seemed more shocked than she now did, at the unexpected and emaciated appearance of her young friend. With all the tenderness of a fond mother, she pressed his cold hands between her own, and seated him by the cheerful fire which blazed on her hearth; then procured him refreshments, that, joined to her conversation, a little revived his spirits: yet, at this moment, the recollection of the first interview he ever had with her, recurred with pain to his heart. "Our friends at Woodlawn, I hope——" cried he: he paused; but his eyes expressed the inquiry his tongue was unable to make.—"They are well and happy,"

happy," replied Mrs. Marlowe; "and you know, I suppose, of all that has lately happened there?"—"No, I know nothing; I am as one awoke from the slumber of the grave."—"Ere I inform you then," cried Mrs. Marlowe, "let me, my noble Oscar, express my approbation, my admiration of your conduct, of that disinterested nature, which preferred the preservation of constancy to the splendid independency offered to your acceptance." "What splendid independency did I refuse?" asked Oscar, wildly staring at her.—"That which the General offered."—"The General!"—"Yes; and appointed Colonel Belgrave to declare his intentions."—"Oh Heavens!" exclaimed Oscar, starting from his chair, "did the General indeed form such intention? and has Belgrave then deceived me? He told me, my attentions to Miss Honeywood were noticed, and disliked; he filled my soul with unutterable anguish, and persuaded me to a falsehood, which has plunged me into despair."—"He is a monster!" cried Mrs. Marlowe, "and you are a victim to his treachery."—"Oh, no! I will fly to the General, and open my whole soul to him; at his feet I will declare the false ideas of honour which misled me: I shall obtain his forgiveness, and Adela will yet be mine."—"Alas, my child," said Mrs. Marlowe, stopping him, as he was hurrying from the room, "it is now too late; Adela can never be yours—she is married, and married unto Belgrave." Oscar staggered back a few paces, uttered a deep groan,

groan, and fell senseless at her feet. Mrs. Marlowe's cries brought in his servant, as well as her own, to his assistance; he was laid upon a bed, but it was long ere he shewed any signs of recovery. At length, opening his heavy eyes, he sighed deeply, and exclaimed, "She is lost to me for ever!"

The servants were dismissed, and the tender-hearted Mrs. Marlowe knelt beside him. "Oh, my friend," said she, "my heart sympathizes in your sorrow; but it is from your own fortitude more than my sympathy, you must now derive resources of support."—"Oh horrible!" cried Oscar, "to know the cup of happiness was at my lips, and that it was my own hand dashed it from me!"—"Such, alas!" said Mrs. Marlowe, sighing, as if touched, at the moment, with a similar pang of self-regret, "is the waywardness of mortals; too often do they deprive themselves of the blessings of a bounteous Providence, by their own folly and imprudence! Oh, my friend! born, as you were, with a noble ingenuity of soul, never let that soul again be sullied by the smallest deviation from sincerity!"—"Do not aggravate my sufferings," said Oscar, "by dwelling on my error."—"No! I would sooner die than be guilty of such barbarity! But admonition never sinks so deeply in the heart as in the hour of trial. Young, amiable as you are, life teems, I doubt not, with various blessings for you, blessings which you will know how to value; for early disappointment is the nurse of wisdom."—"Alas!" exclaimed

he,

he; "what blessings?"—"Those, at least," cried Mrs. Marlowe, "are in your own power—the peace, the happiness, which ever proceeds from a mind conscious of having discharged the incumbent duties of life, and patiently submitted to its trials."—"But do you think I will calmly submit to his baseness?" said Oscar, interrupting her. "No! Belgrave shall never triumph over me with impunity!" He started from the bed, and rushing into the outer room, snatched his sword from the table, on which he had flung it at his entrance. Mrs. Marlowe caught his arm: "Rash young man!" exclaimed she, "whither would you go? Is it to scatter ruin and desolation around you?—Suppose your vengeance was gratified, would that restore your happiness? Think you that Adela, the child of virtue and propriety, would ever notice the murderer of her husband, how unworthy soever that husband might be? or that the old General, who so fondly planned your felicity, would forgive, if he could survive, the evils of his house, occasioned by you?" The sword dropped from the hand of the trembling Oscar: "I have been blameable," cried he, "in allowing myself to be transported to such an effort of revenge; I forgot every thing but that: and as to my own life, deprived of Adela, it appears so gloomy as to be scarcely worth preserving."

Mrs. Marlowe seized this moment of yielding softness, to advise and reason with him; her tears mingled with his, as she listened to his relation of Belgrave's

Belgrave's perfidy—tears augmented by reflecting that Adela, the darling of her care and her affections, was also a victim to it. She convinced Oscar, however, that it would be prudent to confine the fatal secret to their own breasts. The agitation of his mind was too much for the weak state of his health; the fever returned, and he felt unable to quit the cottage. Mrs. Marlowe prepared a bed for him, trusting he would soon be able to remove; but she was disappointed—it was long ere Oscar could quit the bed of sickness. She watched over him with maternal tenderness, while he, like a blasted flower, seemed hastening to decay.

The General was stung to the soul by the rejection of his offer, which, he thought, would have inspired the soul of Oscar with rapture and gratitude; never had his pride been so severely wounded, never before had he felt humbled in his own eyes. His mortifying reflections the Colonel soon found means to remove, by the most delicate flattery and the most assiduous attention; assuring the General that his conduct merited not the censure, but the applause of the world. The sophistry which can reconcile us to ourselves is truly pleasing. The Colonel gradually became a favourite; and when he insinuated his attachment for Adela, was assured he should have all the General's interest with her. He was now more anxious than ever to have her advantageously settled; there was something so humiliating in the idea of her being rejected, that it drove him,

him, at times, almost to madness. The Colonel possessed all the advantages of fortune; but these weighed little in his favour with the General (whose notions we have already proved very disinterested), and much less with his daughter. On the first overture about him, she requested the subject might be entirely dropped—the mention of love was extremely painful to her; wounded by her disappointment in the severest manner, her heart required time to heal it: her feelings delicacy confined to her own bosom; but her languid eyes, and faded cheeks, denoted their poignancy. She avoided company, and was perpetually wandering through the romantic and solitary paths which she and Oscar had trod together: here, more than ever, she thought of him; and feared she had treated her poor companion unkindly. She saw him oppressed with sadness, and yet she had driven him from her by the repulsive coldness of her manner—a manner, too, which, from its being so suddenly assumed, could not fail of conveying an idea of her disappointment. This hurt her delicacy as much as her tenderness, and she would have given worlds, had she possessed them, to recall the time when she could have afforded consolation to Oscar, and convinced him that, solely as a friend, she regarded him. The Colonel was not discouraged by her coldness; he was in the habit of conquering difficulties, and doubted not he should overcome any she threw in his way. He sometimes, as if by chance, contrived to meet her in her rambles: his
conversation

conversation was always amusing, and confined within the limits she had prescribed; but his eyes, by the tenderest expression, declared the pain he suffered from this prescription, and secretly pleased Adela, as it convinced her of the implicit deference he paid to her will.

Some weeks had elapsed since Oscar's voluntary exile from Woodlawn; and sanguine as were the Colonel's hopes, he found, without a stratagem, they would not be realized, at least so soon as he expected. Fertile in invention, he was not long in concerting one: he followed Adela one morning into the garden, and found her reading in the arbour: she laid aside the book at his entrance, and they chatted for some time on indifferent subjects. The Colonel's servant at last appeared with a large packet of letters, which he presented to his master, who, with a hesitating air, was about putting them into his pocket, when Adela prevented him. "Make no ceremony, Colonel," said she, "with me; I shall resume my book till you have perused your letters." The Colonel bowed for her permission, and began. Her attention was soon drawn from her book, by the sudden emotion he betrayed: he started, and exclaimed, "Oh Heavens, what a wretch!" then, as if suddenly recollecting his situation, looked at Adela, appeared confused, stammered out a few inarticulate words, and resumed his letter. When finished, he seemed to put it into his pocket, but in reality dropped it at his feet, for the basest purpose.

He

He ran over the remainder of the letters, and rising, entreated Adela to excuse his leaving her so abruptly, to answer some of them.

Soon after his departure, Adela perceived an open letter lying at her feet: she immediately took it up, with an intention of returning to the house with it, when the sight of her own name, in capital letters, and in the well-known hand of Fitzalan, struck her sight. She threw the letter on a table; an universal tremor seized her; she would have given any consideration to know why she was mentioned in a correspondence between Belgrave and Fitzalan. Her eye involuntarily glanced at the letter; she saw some words in it which excited still more strongly her curiosity; it could no longer be repressed: she snatched it up, and read as follows:—

“ TO COLONEL BELGRAVE.

“ YOU accuse me of insensibility to what you call the matchless charms of Adela, an accusation I acknowledge I merit; but why? because I have been too susceptible to those of another, which, in the fond estimation of a lover at least, appear infinitely superior? The General's offer was certainly a most generous and flattering one, and has gratified every feeling of my soul, by giving me an opportunity of sacrificing at the shrine of Love, Ambition, and Self-interest. My disinterested conduct has confirmed me in the affections of my dear girl, whose vanity I cannot help thinking a
little

little elevated, by the triumph I have told her she obtained over Adela ; but this is excusable indeed, when we consider the object I relinquished for her. Would to Heaven the General was propitious to your wishes ! It would yield me much happiness to see you, my first and best friend, in possession of a treasure you have so long sighed for. I shall no doubt receive a long lecture from you, for letting the affair relative to Adela be made known ; but, faith, I could not resist telling my charmer. Heaven grant discretion may seal her lips ! If not, I suppose I shall be summoned to a formidable combat with the old General. Adieu ; and believe me,

“ DEAR COLONEL,

“ Ever yours,

“ OSCAR FITZALAN.”

“ Wretch ! ” cried the agitated Adela, dropping the letter (which, it is scarce necessary to say, was an infamous forgery) in an agony of grief and indignation, “ is this the base return we meet for our wishes to raise you to prosperity ? Oh, cruel Fitzalan ! is it Adela, who thought you so amiable, and who never thoroughly valued wealth till she believed it had given her the power of conducing to your felicity, whom you hold up as an object of ridicule for unfeeling vanity to triumph over ? ” Wounded pride and tenderness raised a whirl of contending passions in her breast ; she sunk upon the bench, her head rested on her hand, and sighs and tears burst

burst from her. She now resolved to inform Fitzalan she knew the baseness of his conduct, and stinging his heart with keen reproaches—now resolved to pass it over in silent contempt. While thus fluctuating, the Colonel softly advanced, and stood before her. In the tumult of her mind, she had quite forgot the probability of his returning, and involuntarily screamed and started at his appearance. By her confusion, she doubted not but he would suspect her of having perused the fatal letter. Oppressed by the idea, her head sunk on her bosom, and her face was covered with blushes. “What a careless fellow I am!” said the Colonel, taking up the letter, which he then pretended to perceive. He glanced at Adela: “Curse it,” continued he, “I would rather have had all the letters read than this one.”—“He suspects me,” thought Adela. Her blushes faded, and she fell back on her seat, unable to support the oppressive idea of having acted against the rules of propriety. Belgrave flew to her support: “Love-liest of women!” he exclaimed, with all the softness he could assume, “what means this agitation?”—“I have been suddenly affected,” answered Adela, a little recovering; and rising, she motioned to return to the house.—“Thus,” answered the Colonel, “you always fly me: but go, Miss Honeywood—I have no right, no attraction indeed, to detain you; yet be assured,” and he summoned a tear to his aid, while he pressed her hand to his bosom, “a heart more truly devoted to you than mine, you can never

little elevated, by the triumph I had obtained over Adela ; but this was proposed on me. when we consider the object, and since I dare Would to Heaven the General at least, the title of your wishes ! It would be my," said Adela, please you, my first and treasure you have joyfully recovered, and he prevailed doubt receive instead of returning to the house. the affair resolved by his attention : his insidious faith, I could not have dropped manna ; he gradually stole her grant from painful recollections. The implicit I should be said her will flattered her wounded pride : th respect he paid her gratitude was excited by knowing he resented the disrespectful mention of her name in Fitzalan's letter : in short, she felt esteem and respect for him, contempt and resentment for Oscar. The Colonel was too penetrating not to discover her sentiments, and too artful not to take advantage of them. Had Adela indeed obeyed the real feelings of her heart, she would have declared against marrying ; but pride urged her to a step, which would prove to Fitzalan his conduct had not affected her.

The General rejoiced at obtaining her consent ; and received a promise that, for some time, she should not be separated from him. The most splendid preparations were made for the nuptials ; but, though Adela's resentment remained unabated, she soon began to wish she had not been so precipitate in obeying it : an involuntary repugnance rose in her mind against the connexion she was about forming,

and honour alone kept her from declining it for Her beloved friend, Mrs. Marlowe, supported ughout the trying occasion; and, in an in-hour, Adela gave her hand to the perfidi-

a fortnight after her nuptials, she heard some of the officers of Oscar's illness. She flushed at his name. "Faith," cried one of them, "Mrs. Marlowe is a charming woman; it is well he got into such snug quarters: I really believe elsewhere he would have given up the ghost."—"Poor fellow!" said Adela, sighing heavily, yet without being sensible of it. Belgrave rose, he caught her eyes, a dark frown lowered on his brow, and he looked as if he would pierce into the recesses of her heart. She shuddered, and for the first time, felt the tyranny she had imposed upon herself. As Mrs. Marlowe chose to be silent upon the subject, she resolved not to mention it to her; but she sent every day to invite her to Woodlawn, expecting, by this, to hear something of Oscar; but she was disappointed. At the end of a fortnight, Mrs. Marlowe made her appearance: she looked pale and thin. Adela gently reproved her for her long absence, trusting this would oblige her to alledge the reason of it; but no such thing: Mrs. Marlowe began to converse on indifferent subjects. Adela suddenly grew peevish, and sullenly sat to her work.

In a few days after Mrs. Marlowe's visit, Adela, one evening immediately after dinner, ordered the

carriage to the cottage. By this time she supposed Oscar had left it; and flattered herself, in the course of conversation, she should learn whether he was perfectly recovered, ere he departed. Proposing to surprise her friend, she stole, by a winding path, to the cottage, and softly opened the parlour door; but what were her feelings when she perceived Oscar sitting at the fireside with Mrs. Marlowe, engaged in deep conversation! She stopped, unable to advance: Mrs. Marlowe embraced, and led her forward. The emotions of Oscar were not inferior to Adela's; he attempted to rise, but could not. A glance from the expressive eyes of Mrs. Marlowe, which seemed to conjure him not to yield to a weakness which would betray his real sentiments to Adela, somewhat reanimated him. He rose, and tremblingly approached her: "Allow me, Madam," cried he, "to——" the sentence died unfinished on his lips; he had not power to offer congratulations on an event which had probably destroyed the happiness of Adela, as well as his own.—"Oh, a truce with compliments," said Mrs. Marlowe, forcing herself to assume a cheerful air: "prithee, good folks, let us be seated, and enjoy, this cold evening, the comforts of a good fire." She forced the trembling, the almost fainting Adela, to take some wine; and by degrees, the flutter of her spirits and Oscar's abated; but the sadness of their countenances, the anguish of their souls, increased. The cold formality, the distant reserve they both assumed, filled each with

with sorrow and regret. So pale, so emaciated, so woe-begone did Fitzalan appear, so much the son of sorrow and despair, that, had he half murdered Adela, she could not, at that moment, have felt for him any other sentiments than those of pity and compassion. Mrs. Marlowe, in a laughing way, told her of the trouble she had had with him; "for which, I assure you," said she, "he rewards me badly; for the moment he was enlarged from the nursery, he either forgot or neglected all the rules I had laid down for him. Pray do join your commands to mine, and charge him to take more care of himself."—"I would most willingly," cried Adela, "if I thought they would influence him to do so."—"Influence!" repeated Oscar emphatically: "Oh Heavens!" Then starting up, he hurried to the window, as if to hide and to indulge his melancholy. The scene he viewed from it was dreary and desolate: it was now the latter end of autumn, the evening was cold, a savage blast howled amongst the hills, and the sky was darkened by a coming storm. Mrs. Marlowe roused him from his deep reverie: "I am sure," said she, "the prospect you view from the window can have no great attractions at present."—"And yet," cried he, "there is something sadly pleasing in it: the leafless trees, the fading flowers of autumn, excite in my bosom a kind of mournful sympathy—they are emblems to me of him whose tenderest hopes have been disappointed; but, unlike him, they, after a short

period, shall again flourish with primæval beauty.” —“Nonsense!” exclaimed Mrs. Marlowe: “your illness has affected your spirits; but this gloom will vanish long before my orchard reassumes its smiling appearance, and haply attracts another smart red-coat to visit an old woman.” —“Oh, with what an enthusiasm of tenderness,” cried Oscar, “shall I ever remember the dear, though dangerous moment, I first entered this cottage!” —“Now no flattery, Oscar,” said Mrs. Marlowe: “I know your fickle sex too well, to believe I have made a lasting impression. Why, the very first fine old woman you meet at your ensuing quarters, will, I dare say, have similar praise bestowed on her.” —“No,” replied he, with a languid smile; “I can assure you solemnly, the impression which has been made on my heart will never be effaced.” He stole a look at Adela; her head sunk upon her bosom, and her heart began to beat violently. Mrs. Marlowe wished to change the subject entirely: she felt the truest compassion for the unhappy young couple, and had fervently desired their union; but since irrevocably separated, she wished to check any intimation of a mutual attachment, which now could answer no purpose but that of increasing their misery. She rung for tea, and endeavoured, by her conversation, to enliven the tea-table. The effort, however, was not seconded. “You have often,” cried she, addressing Adela, as they again drew their chairs round the fire, “desired to hear the exact particulars of my life:

life: unconquerable feelings of regret hitherto prevented my acquiescing in your desire ; but, as nothing better now offers for passing away the hours, I will, if you please, relate them.”—“ You will oblige me by so doing,” cried Adela ; “ my curiosity, you know, has been long excited.”

CHAP. XIII.

But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,

And well my life shall pay ;

I'll seek the solitude he sought,

And stretch me where he lay.

GOLDSMITH

“ To begin then, as they say in a Novel, without further preface, I was the only child of a country curate in the southern part of England, who, like his wife, was of a good but reduced family. Contented dispositions, and an agreeable neighbourhood, ready, on every occasion, to oblige them, rendered them, in their humble situations, completely happy. I was the idol of both their hearts : every one told my mother I should grow up a beauty ; and she, poor simple woman ! believed the flattering tale. Naturally ambitious, and somewhat romantic, she expected nothing less than my attaining, by my charms, an elevated situation. To fit me for it, therefore, according to her idea, she gave me all the

shewy, instead of solid, advantages of education. My father being a meek, or rather an indolent man, submitted entirely to her direction. Thus, without knowing the grammatical part of my own language, I was taught to gabble bad French; and instead of mending or making my clothes, to flourish upon cat-gut and embroider satin. I was taught dancing by a man who kept a cheap school for that purpose in the village: music I could not aspire to, my mother's finances being insufficient to purchase an instrument; she was therefore obliged to content herself with my knowing the vocal part of that delightful science, and instructed me in singing a few old-fashioned airs with a thousand graces, in her opinion at least.

“To make me excel by my dress, as well as my accomplishments, all the misses of the village, the remains of her finery were cut and altered into every form which art or ingenuity could suggest; and Heaven forgive me! but my chief inducement in going to church on a Sunday, was to exhibit my flounced silk petticoat and painted chip hat.

“When I attained my sixteenth year, my mother thought me, and supposed every one else must do the same, the most perfect creature in the world. I was lively, thoughtless, vain, and ambitious to an extravagant degree, yet truly innocent in my disposition; and often forgetting the appearance I had been taught to assume, indulged the natural gaiety of my heart, and in a game of hide-and-go-seek, amongst

amongst the haycocks in a meadow, by moonlight, enjoyed perfect felicity.

“ Once a-week, accompanied by my mother, I attended the dancing-master’s school, to practise country-dances. One evening we had just concluded a set, and were resting ourselves, when an elegant youth, in a fashionable riding-dress, entered the room. His appearance at once excited admiration and surprise. Never shall I forget the palpitation of my heart at his approach : every girl experienced the same ; every cheek was flushed, and every eye sparkled with hope and expectation. He walked round the room with an easy unembarrassed air, as if to take a survey of the company : he stopped by a very pretty girl, the miller’s daughter. Good Heavens ! what were my agonies ! My mother too, who sat beside me, turned pale, and would actually, I believe, have fainted, had he taken any farther notice of her : fortunately he did not, but advanced. My eyes caught his : he again paused, looked surprised and pleased ; and after a moment passed in seeming consideration, bowed with the utmost elegance, and requested the honour of my hand for the ensuing dance. My politeness had hitherto only been in theory : I arose, dropped him a profound curtsy, assured him the honour would be all on my side, and I was happy to grant his request. He smiled, I thought, a little archly, and coughed to avoid laughing. I blushed, and felt embarrassed ; but he led me to the head of the room to call a

dance: and my triumph over my companions so exhilarated my spirits, that I immediately lost all confusion.

“ I had been engaged to a young farmer, and he was enraged, not only at my breaking my engagement without his permission, but at the superior graces of my partner, who threatened to be a formidable rival to him. ‘ By jingo!’ said Clod, coming up to me in a surly manner, ‘ I think, Miss Fanny, you have not used me quite genteelly: I don’t see why this here fine spark should take the lead of us all.’—‘ Creature!’ cried I, with an ineffable look of contempt, which he could not bear, and retired grumbling. My partner could no longer refrain from laughing; the simplicity of my manners, notwithstanding the airs I endeavoured to assume, highly delighted him. ‘ No wonder,’ cried he, ‘ the poor swain should be mortified at losing the hand of his charming Fanny.’

“ The dancing over, we rejoined my mother, who was on thorns to begin a conversation with the stranger, that she might let him know we were not to be ranked with the present company. ‘ I am sure, sir,’ said she, ‘ a gentleman of your elegant appearance must feel rather awkward in the present party—it is so with us; as indeed it must be with every person of fashion: but in an obscure little village like this, we must not be too nice in our society, except, like a hermit, we could do without any.’ The stranger assented to whatever she said,
and

and accepted an invitation to sup with us. My mother instantly sent an intimation of her will to my father, to have, not the fatted calf indeed, but the fatted duck prepared; and he and the maid used such expedition, that, by the time we returned, a neat comfortable supper was ready to lay on the table. Mr. Marlowe, the stranger's name, as he informed me, was all animation and affability: it is unnecessary to say, that my mother, father, and myself, were all complaisance, delight, and attention. On departing he asked, and obtained permission, of course, to renew his visit the next day; and my mother immediately set him down as her future son-in-law.

“As every thing is speedily communicated in such a small village as we resided in, we learned, on the preceding evening he had stopped at the inn, and, hearing music, had inquired from whence it proceeded, and had gone, out of curiosity, to the dance: we also learned that his attendants reported him to be heir to a large fortune. This report, vain as I was, was almost enough of itself to engage my heart: judge, then, whether it was not an easy conquest to a person, who, besides the above-mentioned attraction, possessed those of a graceful figure and cultivated mind. He visited continually at our cottage; and I, uncultivated as I was, daily strengthened myself in his affections: in conversing with him, I forgot the precepts of vanity and affectation, and obeyed the dictates of nature and sensibility. He soon

declared the motives of his visits to me: 'To have immediately demanded my hand,' he said, 'would have gratified the tenderest wishes of his soul; but, in his present situation, that was impossible. Left, at an early age, destitute and distressed, by the death of his parents, an old whimsical uncle, married to a woman equally capricious, had adopted him as heir to their large possessions. He found it difficult,' he said, 'to submit to their ill-humour; and was confident, if he took any step against their inclinations, he should for ever forfeit their favour: therefore, if my parents would allow a reciprocal promise to pass between us, binding each to each, the moment he became master of his expected fortune, or obtained an independence, he would make me a partaker of it.' They consented, and he enjoined us to the strictest secrecy, saying, 'One of his attendants was placed about him as a kind of spy; he had hitherto deceived him with respect to us, declaring my father was an intimate friend, and that his uncle knew he intended visiting him.' But my unfortunate vanity betrayed the secret it was so material for me to keep; I was bound, indeed, not to reveal it. One morning a young girl, who had been an intimate acquaintance of mine till I knew Marlowe, came to see me: 'Why, Fanny,' cried she, 'you have given us all up for Mr. Marlowe: take care, my dear, he makes you amends for the loss of all your other friends.'—'I shall take your advice,' said I, with a smile, and a conceited toss of my head.—

head.—‘Faith, for my part,’ continued she, ‘I think you were very foolish not to secure a good settlement for yourself with Clod.’—‘With Clod!’ repeated I, with the utmost haughtiness.—‘Lord, child, you forget who I am.’—‘Who you are!’ exclaimed she, provoked at my insolence.—‘Oh yes, to be sure! I forget that you are the daughter of a poor country curate, with more pride in your head than money in your purse.’—‘Neither do I forget,’ said I, ‘that your ignorance is equal to your impertinence. If I am the daughter of a poor country curate, I am the affianced wife of a rich man, and as much elevated by expectation as spirit above you.’ Our conversation was repeated throughout the village, and reached the ears of Marlowe’s attendant, who instantly developed the real motive which detained him so long in the village. He wrote to his uncle an account of the whole affair: the consequence of this was a letter to poor Marlowe, full of the bitterest reproaches; charging him, without delay, to return home. This was like a thunder-stroke to us all; but there was no alternative between obeying, or forfeiting his uncle’s favour. ‘I fear, my dear Fanny,’ cried he, as he folded me to his bosom, a little before his departure, ‘it will be long ere we shall meet again; nay, I also fear I shall be obliged to promise not to write: if both these fears are realized, impute not either absence or silence to a want of the tenderest affection for you.’ He went, and with him all my happiness.

“My

“ My mother, shortly after his departure, was attacked by a nervous fever, which terminated her days. My father, naturally of weak spirits and delicate constitution, was so shocked by the sudden death of his beloved and faithful companion, that he sunk beneath his grief. The horrors of my mind I cannot describe; I seemed to stand alone in the world, without one friendly hand to prevent my sinking into the grave, which contained the dearest objects of my love. I did not know where Marlowe lived, and even if I had, durst not venture an application, which might be the means of ruining him. The esteem of my neighbours I had forfeited by my conceit: they paid me no attention but what common humanity dictated, merely to prevent my perishing; and that they made me sensibly feel. In this distress, I received an invitation from a schoolfellow of mine, who had married a rich farmer about forty miles from our village, to take up my residence with her, till I was sufficiently recovered to fix on some plan for future subsistence. I gladly accepted the offer; and, after paying a farewell visit to the grave of my regretted parents, I set off, in the cheapest conveyance I could find, to her habitation, with all my worldly treasure packed up in a portmanteau.

“ With my friend I trusted I should enjoy a calm and happy asylum, till Marlowe was able to fulfil his promise, and allow me to reward her kindness; but this idea she soon put to flight, by informing me, as my health returned, I must think of some method

method of supporting myself. I started, as at the utter annihilation of all my hopes ; for vain and ignorant of the world, I imagined Marlowe would never think of me, if once disgraced by servitude. I told her I understood little of any thing, except fancy-work. She was particularly glad, she said, to hear I knew that, as it would, in all probability, gain me admittance to the service of a rich old lady in the neighbourhood, who had long been seeking for a person who could read agreeably, and do fancy-works, with which she delighted to ornament her house. She was a little whimsical, to be sure, she added, but well-timed flattery might turn those whims to advantage ; and if I regarded my reputation, I should not reject so respectable a protection. There was no alternative : I inquired more particularly about her ; but how great was my emotion, when I learned she was the aunt of Marlowe ! My heart throbbed with exquisite delight at the idea of being in the same house with him ; besides, the service of his aunt would not, I flattered myself, degrade me as much in his eyes as that of another person's. It was necessary, however, my name should be concealed, and I requested my friend to comply with my wish in that respect. She rallied me about my pride, which, she supposed, had suggested the request, but promised to comply with it. She had no doubt but her recommendation would be sufficient to procure me immediate admittance ; and accordingly, taking some of my work with me, I proceeded

ceeded to the habitation of Marlowe. It was an antique mansion, surrounded with neat clipped hedges, level lawns, and formal plantations: two statues, cast in the same mould, and resembling nothing either in heaven, earth, or sea, stood grinning horribly upon the pillars of a massy gate, as if to guard the entrance from impertinent intrusion.—On knocking, an old porter appeared. I gave him my message, but he, like the statues, seemed stationary; and would not, I believe, have stirred from his situation to deliver an embassy from the King. He called, however, to a domestic, who, happening to be a little deaf, was full half an hour before he heard him. At last I was ushered up stairs into an apartment, from the heat of which one might have conjectured it was under the torrid zone: though in the middle of July, a heavy hot fire burned in the grate, a thick carpet, representing birds, beasts, and flowers, was spread on the floor, and the windows, closely screwed down, were heavy with wood-work, and darkened with dust. The master and mistress of the mansion, like Darby and Joan, sat in arm-chairs on each side of the fire; three dogs, and as many cats, slumbered at their feet: he was leaning on a spider-table, poring over a voluminous book, and she was stitching a counterpane: sickness and ill-nature were visible in each countenance. ‘So,’ said she, raising a huge pair of spectacles at my entrance, and examining me from head to foot, ‘you are come from Mrs. Wilson’s! Why, bless me, child, you

you are quite too young for any business! Pray, what is your name? and where do you come from?' I was prepared for these questions, and told her the truth, only concealing my real name and the place of my nativity. 'Well, let me see those works of yours,' cried she. I produced them, and the spectacles were again drawn down, 'Why, they are neat enough, to be sure,' said she; 'but the design is bad, very bad indeed. There is taste! there is execution!' directing me to some pictures, in heavy gilt frames, hung round the room. I told her with sincerity, 'I had never seen any thing like them.' — 'To be sure, child,' exclaimed she, pleased at what she considered admiration in me, 'it is running a great risk to take you; but if you think you can conform to the regulations of my house, I will, from compassion, and as you are recommended by Mrs. Willson, venture to engage you: but remember, I must have no gad-about, no fly-flapper, no chatterer in my family; you must be decent in your dress and carriage, discreet in your words, industrious at your work, and satisfied with the indulgence of going to church on a Sunday.' I saw I was about entering on a painful servitude; but the idea of its being sweetened by the sympathy of Marlowe, a little reconciled me to it. On promising all she desired, every thing was settled for my admission into her family, and she took care I should perform the promises I made her. I shall not recapitulate the various trials I underwent from her austerity and peevishness; suffice

fine it to say, my patience, as well as taste, underwent a perfect martyrdom : I was continually seated at a frame, working pictures of her own invention, which were every thing that was hideous in nature : I was never allowed to go out, except on a Sunday to church, or on a chance evening, when it was too dark to distinguish colours.

“ Marlowe was absent on my entering the family, nor durst I ask when he was expected. My health and spirits gradually declined, from my close confinement : when allowed, as I have before said, of a chance time to go out, instead of enjoying the fresh air, I have sat down to weep over scenes of former happiness. I dined constantly with the old house-keeper : she informed me one day, that Mr. Marlowe, her master's young heir, who had been absent some time on a visit, was expected home on the ensuing day. Fortunately the good dame was too busily employed to notice my agitation. I retired as soon as possible from the table, in a state of indescribable pleasure : never shall I forget my emotions when I heard the trampling of his horse's feet, and saw him enter the house. Vainly I endeavoured to resume my work—my hands trembled, and I sunk back on my chair, to indulge the delightful idea of an interview with him, which I believed to be inevitable. My severe task-mistress soon awakened me from my delightful dream ; she came to tell me, I must confine myself to my own and the house-keeper's room, which, to a virtuous discreet maiden, such

such as I appeared to be, she supposed would be no hardship, while her nephew, who was a young, perhaps rather a wild young man, remained in the house : when he again left it, which would soon be the case, I should regain my liberty. My heart sunk within me at her words ; but when the first shock was over, I consoled myself by thinking I should be able to elude her vigilance. I was, however, mistaken ; she and the housekeeper were perfect Arguses. To be in the same house with Marlowe, yet without his knowing it, drove me almost distracted.

“ I at last thought of an expedient, which, I hoped, would effect the discovery I wanted. I had just finished a piece of work, which my mistress was delighted with ; it was an enormous flower-basket, mounted on the back of a cat, which held beneath its paw a trembling mouse. The raptures the old lady expressed at seeing her own design so ably executed, encouraged me to ask permission to embroider a picture of my own designing, for which I had the silks lying by me. She complied, and I set about it with alacrity. I copied my face and figure as exactly as I could, and in mourning drapery and a pensive attitude, placed the little image by a rustic grave, in the churchyard of my native village ; at the head of which, half embowered in trees, appeared the lonely cottage of my departed parents. These well-known objects, I thought, would revive, if indeed she was absent from it, the idea of poor Fanny, in the mind of Marlowe. I presented the picture to
my

my mistress, who was pleased with the present, and promised to have it framed. The next day, while I sat at dinner, the door suddenly opened, and Marlowe entered the room. I thought I should have fainted; my companion dropped her knife and fork with great precipitation, and Marlowe told her he was very ill, and wanted a cordial from her. She rose, with a dissatisfied air, to comply with his request. He, taking this opportunity of approaching a little nearer, darted a glance of pity and tenderness, and softly whispered, 'To-night, at eleven o'clock, meet me in the front parlour.' You may conceive how tardily the hours passed till the appointed time came, when, stealing to the parlour, I found Marlowe expecting me. He folded me to his heart, and his tears mingled with mine, as I related my melancholy tale. 'You are now, my Fanny,' he cried, 'entirely mine: deprived of the protection of your tender parents, I shall endeavour to fulfil the sacred trust they reposed in my honour, by securing mine to you as far as lies in my power. I was not mistaken,' continued he, 'in the idea I had formed of the treatment I should receive from my flinty-hearted relations, on leaving you: had I not promised to drop all correspondence with you, I must have relinquished all hopes of their favour. Bitter indeed,' cried he, while a tear started in his eye, 'is the bread of dependance! Ill could my soul submit to the indignities I received: but I consoled myself throughout them, by the idea of future happiness

piness with my Fanny. Had I known her situation, which indeed it was impossible I should, as my uncle's spy attended me wherever I went, no dictate of prudence would have prevented my flying to her aid.'—'Thank Heaven, then, you were ignorant of it!' said I.—'My aunt,' he proceeded, 'shewed me your work, lavishing the highest encomiums on it. I glanced me eye carelessly over it; but, in a moment, how was that careless eye attracted by the well-known objects presented to it! 'This,' said I to my heart, 'can only be Fanny's work.' I tried to discover, from my aunt, whether my conjectures were wrong; but without success. When I retired to dress, I asked my servant if there had been any addition to the family during my absence? He said; a young woman was hired to do fine works, but she never appeared among the servants.

"Marlowe proceeded to say, he could not bear. I should longer continue in servitude; and that, without delay, he was resolved to unite his fate to mine. I opposed this resolution a little; but soon, too self-interested, I fear, acquiesced in it. It was agreed I should inform his aunt, my health would not longer permit my continuing in her family; and that I should retire to a village six miles off, where Marlowe undertook to bring a young clergyman, a particular friend of his, to perform the ceremony. Our plan, as settled, was carried into execution, and I became the wife of Marlowe.

"I was now, you will suppose, elevated to the
pinnacle

pinnacle of happiness: I was so indeed; but my own folly precipitated me from it. The secrecy I was compelled to observe mortified me exceedingly, as I panted to emerge from the invidious cloud which had so long concealed my beauty and accomplishments from a world that, I was confident, if seen, would pay them the homage they merited. The people with whom I lodged had been obliged by Marlowe; and therefore, from interest and gratitude, obeyed the injunction he gave them, of keeping my residence at their house a secret: they believed, or affected to believe, I was an orphan committed to his care, whom his uncle would be displeased to know he had taken under his protection.

“ Three or four times a-week I received stolen visits from Marlowe; when one day, after a month had elapsed in this manner, standing at the parlour window, I saw Mrs. Wilson walking down the village. I started back, but too late to escape her observation: she immediately bolted into the room, with all the eagerness of curiosity. I bore her first interrogatories tolerably well; but when she upbraided me for leaving the excellent service she had procured for me, for duplicity in saying I was going to another, and for my indiscretion in respect to Marlowe, I lost all command of my temper; and remembering the inhumanity with which she had forced me into servitude, I resolved to mortify her completely, by assuming all the airs I had heretofore so ridiculously practised. Lolling in my chair, with

an air of the most careless indifference, I bade her no longer petrify me with her discourse: This raised all the violence of rage, and she plainly told me, from my conduct with Marlowe, I was unworthy her notice.—‘Therefore,’ cried I, forgetting every dictate of prudence, ‘his wife will neither desire nor receive it in future.’—‘His wife!’ she repeated, with a look of scorn and credulity. I produced the certificate of my marriage; thus, from an impulse of vanity and resentment, putting myself in the power of a woman, a stranger to every liberal feeling, and whose mind was inflamed with envy towards me. The hint I forced myself, at parting, to give her, to keep the affair secret, only determined her more strongly to reveal it.

“The day after her visit, Marlowe entered my apartment, pale, agitated, and breathless: he sunk into a chair. A pang, like conscious guilt, smote my heart; and I trembled as I approached him. He repulsed me, when I attempted to touch his hand. ‘Cruel, inconsiderate woman!’ said he, ‘to what dreadful lengths has your vanity hurried you! it has drawn destruction upon your own head, as well as mine.’—Shame and remorse tied my tongue: had I spoken, indeed, I could not have vindicated myself; and I turned aside, and wept. Marlowe, mild, tender, and adoring, could not long retain resentment: he started from his chair, and clasped me to his bosom. ‘Oh Fanny!’ he cried, ‘though you have ruined me, you are still dear as ever to me.’

me.' This tenderness affected me even more than his reproaches, and tears and sighs declared my penitence. His expectations, relative to his uncle, were finally destroyed: on being informed of our marriage, which Mrs. Wilson lost no time in telling him, he burned his will, and immediately made another, in favour of a distant relation. On hearing this intelligence, I was almost distracted: I flung myself at my husband's feet, implored his pardon, yet declared I could never forgive myself. He grew more composed upon the increase of my agitation, as if purposely to sooth my spirits; assuring me that, though his uncle's favour was lost, he had other friends on whom he greatly depended. We set off for London, and found his dependance was not ill placed; for soon after his arrival, he obtained a place of considerable emolument in one of the public offices. My husband delighted in gratifying me, though I was often both extravagant and whimsical, and almost ever on the wing for admiration and amusement. I was reckoned a pretty woman, and received with rapture the nonsense and adulation addressed to me. I became acquainted with a young widow, who concealed a depraved heart under a specious appearance of innocence and virtue; and by aiding the vices of others, procured the means of gratifying her own: yet so secret were all her transactions, that calumny had not yet attacked her, and her house was the rendezvous of the most fashionable people. My husband, who did not dislike her manners,

manners, encouraged our intimacy; and at her parties, I was noticed by a young nobleman, then at the head of the *ton*. He declared I was one of the most charming objects he had ever beheld; and for such a declaration, I thought him the most polite I had ever known. As Lord T—— condescended to wear my chains, I must certainly, I thought, become quite the *rage*. My transports, however, were a little checked, by the grave remonstrances of my husband, who assured me Lord T—— was a famous, or rather an infamous, libertine; and that, if I did not avoid his Lordship's particular attentions, he must insist on my relinquishing the widow's society. This I thought cruel; but I saw him resolute, and promised to act as he desired—a promise I never adhered to, except when he was present.

“ I was now in a situation to promise an increase of family, and Marlowe wished me to nurse the child. The tenderness of my heart seconded his wish—I resolved on obeying it; but when the widow heard my intention, she laughed at it, and said, ‘ It was absolutely ridiculous, for the sake of a squalling brat, to give up all the pleasures of life; besides, it would be much better taken care of in some of the villages about London.’ I denied this: still, however, she dwelt on the sacrifices I must make, the amusements I must give up, and at last completely conquered my resolution. I pretended to Marlowe my health was too delicate to allow me to bear such a fatigue, and he immediately sacrificed his own in-

clination to mine—I have often wondered at the kind of infatuation with which he complied with all my desires. My little girl, almost as soon as born, was sent from me; but, on being able to go out again, I received a considerable shock, from hearing my noble admirer was gone to the Continent, owing to a trifling derangement in his affairs.—The vain pursuits of pleasure and dissipation were still continued. Three years passed in this manner, during which I had a son, and my little girl was brought home. I have since often felt astonished at the cold indifference with which I regarded my Marlowe, and our lovely babes, on whom he doted with all the enthusiasm of tenderness. Alas! vanity had then absorbed my heart, and deadened every feeling of nature and sensibility: it is the parent of self-love and apathy, and degrades those who harbour it, below humanity.

“ Lord T—— now returned from the Continent. He swore my idea had never been absent from his mind, and that I was more charming than ever; while I thought him, if possible, more polite and engaging. Again my husband remonstrated. Sometimes I seemed to regard these remonstrances, sometimes I protested I would not submit to such unnecessary control: I knew indeed that my intentions were innocent, and believed I might safely indulge my vanity, without endangering either my reputation or peace. About this time, Marlowe received a summons to attend a dying friend, four miles from London.

London. Our little girl was then in a slight fever, which had alarmed her father, and confined me, most unwillingly I must confess, to the house. Marlowe, on the point of departing, pressed me to his breast: 'My heart, my beloved Fanny,' said he, 'feels unusually heavy—I trust the feeling is no presentiment of approaching ill. Oh, my Fanny! on you and my babes I rest for happiness. Take care of our little cherub, and above all (his meek eye encountering mine), take care of yourself, that, with my accustomed rapture, I may, on my return, receive you to my arms.'

"There was something so solemn and so tender in this address, that my heart melted, and my tears mingled with those which trickled down his pale cheeks. For two days I attended my child assiduously, when the widow made her appearance. She assured me I should injure myself by such close confinement, and that my cheeks were already faded by it. She mentioned a delightful masquerade, which was to be given that night, and for which Lord T—— had presented her with tickets for me and herself; but she declared, except I would accompany her, she would not go. I had often wished to go to a masquerade; I now, however, declined this opportunity of gratifying my inclination, but so faintly, as to prompt a renewal of her solicitations, to which I at last yielded; and, committing my babe to the care of a servant, set off with the widow to a warehouse, to choose dresses. Lord T—— dined
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with

with us, and we were all in the highest spirits imaginable. About twelve, we went in his chariot to the Haymarket; and I was absolutely intoxicated with his flattery, and the dazzling objects around me. At five, we quitted this scene of gaiety. The widow took a chair; I would have followed her example, but my Lord absolutely lifted me into his chariot, and there began talking in a strain which provoked my contempt, and excited my apprehensions. I expressed my displeasure, in terms which checked his boldness, and convinced him he had some difficulties yet to overcome, ere he completed his designs. He made his apologies with so much humility, that I was soon appeased, and prevailed on to accept them.

“ We arrived at the widow’s house in as much harmony as we left it. The flags were wet, and Lord T—— insisted on carrying me into the house. At the door, I observed a man muffled up; but as no one noticed him, I thought no more about it. We sat down to supper in high spirits, and chatted for a considerable time about our past amusements. His Lordship said, after a little sleep we should recruit ourselves by a pleasant jaunt to Richmond, where he had a charming villa. We agreed to his proposal, and retired to rest. About noon we arose; and while I was dressing myself for the projected excursion, a letter was brought in to me. ‘ Good Lord, Halcot,’ exclaimed I, turning to the widow, ‘ if Marlowe is returned, what will become
of

of me?"—"Oh read, my dear creature," cried she impatiently, "and then we can think of excuses."

"I have the letter here," continued Mrs. Marlowe, laying her hand to her breast, and drawing it forth, after a short pause: "I laid it to my heart, to guard it against future folly."

THE LETTER.

"THE presages of my heart were but too true—we parted, never to meet again!—Oh Fanny, beloved of my soul, how are you lost to yourself and Marlowe! The independence, splendor, riches, which I gave up for your sake, were mean sacrifices, in my estimation, to the felicity I fondly expected to have enjoyed with you through life: your beauty charmed my eye, but it was your simplicity captivated my heart. I took, as I thought, the perfect child of innocence and sincerity to my bosom; resolved, from duty as well as from inclination, to shelter you in that bosom, to the utmost of my power, from every adverse storm. Whenever you were indisposed, what agonies did I endure!—yet, what I then dreaded, could I have possibly foreseen, would have been comparative happiness to my present misery; for, oh my Fanny! far preferable would it have been to behold you in the arms of death than infamy.

"I returned immediately after witnessing the last pangs of my friend, oppressed with the awful scene of death, yet cheering my spirits by an anticipation

of the consolation I should receive from my Fanny's sympathy. Good God! what was my horror, when I found my little babe, instead of being restored to health by a mother's care, nearly expiring through her neglect! The angel lay gasping on her bed, deserted by the mercenary wretch to whose care she was consigned. I inquired, and the fatal truth rushed upon my soul: yet, when the first tumult of passion had subsided, I felt that, without yet stronger proofs, I could not abandon you. Alas! too soon did I receive those proofs. I traced you, Fanny, through your giddy round, till I saw you borne, in the arms of the vile Lord T——, into the house of his vile paramour. You will wonder, perhaps, I did not tear you from his grasp; could such a procedure have restored you to me with all your unsullied innocence, I should not have hesitated—but that was impossible; and my eyes then gazed upon Fanny for the last time. I returned to my motherless babes, and I am not ashamed to say, I wept over them, with all the agonies of a fond and betrayed heart.

“ Ere I bid an irrecoverable adieu, I would, if possible, endeavour to convince you that conscience cannot always be stifled, that illicit love is constantly attended by remorse and disappointment; for when familiarity or disease have diminished the charms which excited it, the frail fetters of admiration are broken by him who looks only to an exterior for delight: if indeed your conscience should not be awakened till this hour of desertion comes, when it
does

do not arrive, you may, perhaps, think of Marlowe: yes, Fanny, when your cheeks are faded by care, when your wit is enfeebled by despondency, you may think of him whose tenderness would have outlived both time and change, and supported you, without abatement, through every stage of life.

“To stop short in the career of vice, is, they say, the noblest effort of virtue: may such an effort be yours! and may you yet give joy to the angels of Heaven, who, we are taught to believe, rejoice over them that truly repent! That want should strew no thorns in the path of penitence, all that I could take from my babes I have assigned to you. Oh, my dear culprit, remember the precepts of your early youth—of those who, sleeping in the dust, are spared the bitter tear of anguish, such as I now shed; and ere too late, expiate your errors! In the solitude to which I am hastening, I shall continually pray for you; and when my children raise their spotless hands to Heaven, they shall implore its mercy for erring mortals. Yet think not they shall ever hear your story; oh, never shall the blush of shame, for the frailties of one so near, tinge their ingenuous countenance!—May the sincerity of your repentance restore that peace and happiness to your life, which, at present, I think you must have forfeited; and support you, with fortitude, through its closing period! As a friend once dear, you will ever exist in the memory of

MARLOWE.”

“ As I concluded the letter, my senses, which had been gradually receding, entirely forsook me, and I fell senseless on the floor. Mrs. Halcot and Lord T—— took this opportunity of gratifying their curiosity, by perusing the letter ; and when I recovered, I found myself supported between them. ‘ You see, my dear angel,’ cried Lord T——, ‘ your cruel husband has entirely abandoned you ; but grieve not, for in my arms you shall find a kinder asylum than he ever afforded you.’—‘ True,’ said Mrs. Halcot : ‘ for my part, I think she has reason to rejoice at his desertion.’

“ I shall not attempt to repeat all I said to them in the height of my distraction ; suffice it to say, I reproached them both as the authors of my shame and misery ; and while I spurned Lord T—— indignantly from my feet, accused Mrs. Halcot of possessing neither delicacy nor feeling. Alas ! accusation or reproach could not lighten the weight on my heart ; I felt a dreadful consciousness of having occasioned my own misery—I seemed as if awaking from a disordered dream which had confused my senses ; and the more clearly my perception of what was right returned, the more bitterly I lamented my deviation from it. To be reinstated in the esteem and affection of my husband, was all of felicity I could desire to possess. Full of the idea of being able to effect a reconciliation, I started up ; but ere I reached the door, sunk into an agony of tears, recollecting that, ere this, he was probably far distant

tant from me. My base companions tried to assuage my grief, and make me in reality the wretch poor Marlowe supposed me to be. I heard them in silent contempt, unable to move, till a servant informed me a gentleman below stairs desired to see me. The idea of a relenting husband instantly occurred, and I flew down; but how great was my disappointment, only to see a particular friend of his!—Our meeting was painful in the extreme. I asked him if he knew any thing of Marlowe? and he solemnly assured me he did not. When my confusion and distress had a little subsided, he informed me that, in the morning, he had received a letter from him, with an account of our separation, and the fatal cause of it. The letter contained a deed of settlement on me of a small paternal estate, and a bill of fifty pounds, which Marlowe requested his friend to present himself to me: he also added, my clothes were sent to his house, as our lodgings had been discharged. I did not find it difficult to convince this gentleman of my innocence; and putting myself under his protection, was immediately conveyed to lodgings in a retired part of the town. Here he consoled me with assurances of using every effort to discover the residence of my husband. All, alas! proved unsuccessful, and my health gradually declined; as time wore away my hope, yet left still undiminished my desire of seeing him. Change of air was at last deemed requisite to preserve my existence, and I went to Bristol.

“ I had the good fortune to lodge in the house with an elderly Irish lady, whose sweet and benevolent manners soon gained my warmest esteem, and tempted me to divulge my melancholy tale, where so certain of obtaining pity. She had also suffered severely from the pressure of sorrow ; but hers, as it proceeded not from imprudence, but from the common vicissitudes of life, was borne without that degree of anguish mine occasioned. As the period approached for her return to her native country, I felt the deepest regret at the prospect of our separation, which she, however, removed, by asking me to reside entirely with her. Eight years had elapsed since the loss of my husband, and no latent hope of his return remained in my heart, sufficiently strong to tempt me to forego the advantages of such society : ere I departed, however, I wrote to several of his friends, informing them of the step I intended taking, and if any tidings of Marlowe occurred, where I was to be found. Five years I passed with my valuable friend in retirement, and had the pleasure of thinking I contributed to the ease of her last moments. This cottage, with a few acres adjoining it, and four hundred pounds, was all her wealth ; and to me she bequeathed it, having no relation whose wants gave them any claim upon her.

“ The events I have just related, will, I hope, strengthen the moral so many wish to impress upon the minds of youth ; namely, that, without a strict adherence to propriety, there can be no permanent pleasure;

pleasure ; and that it is the actions of early life must give to old age either happiness and comfort, or sorrow and remorse. Had I attended to the admonitions of wisdom and experience, I should have checked my wanderings from prudence, and preserved my happiness from being sacrificed at the shrine of Vanity ; then, instead of being a solitary being in the world, I might have had my little fireside enlivened by the partner of my heart, and perhaps my children's children sporting around. But suffering is the proper tax we pay for folly. The frailty of human nature, the prevalence of example, the allurements of the world, are mentioned by many as extenuations for misconduct ; though Virtue, say they, is willing, she is often too weak to resist the wishes they excite. Mistaken idea ! and blessed is that virtue, which, by opposing, ends them. With every temptation, we have the means of escape ; and woe be to us, if we neglect those means, or hesitate to disentangle ourselves from the snare which vice or folly may have spread around us ! Sorrow and disappointment are incident to humanity ; and when not occasioned by any conscious imprudence, should be considered as temporary trials from Heaven, to improve and correct us, and therefore cheerfully be borne." A sigh stole from Oscar as she spoke, and a tear trickled down the soft cheek of Adela. " I have," continued Mrs. Marlowe, " given you, like an old woman, a tedious tale ;

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but

but that tediousness, with every other imperfection I have acknowledged, I rest upon your friendship and candour to excuse."

CHAP. XIV.

Deny'd her sight, he often crept
Beneath the hawthorn shade,
To mark the spot in which she wept—
In which she wept and pray'd.

MALLET.

"THE night was waning fast, and Adela rose to depart as her friend concluded her story; yet it required an effort of resolution to retire. Mrs. Marlowe, however, was too well convinced of the expediency and propriety of this, to press her longer stay; though the eyes of Oscar suddenly turned to her, seemed to entreat she would do so. The night was dark and wet, which prevented Mrs. Marlowe from accompanying Adela to the carriage—Not so Oscar: he took the umbrella from the servant who held it for his mistress, and bade him hasten on to have the carriage-door opened.—"Oscar," cried Mrs. Marlowe, extremely unwilling to allow even this short *tête-à-tête*, "Mrs. Belgrave will dispense with your gallantry; for you are really too great an invalid to venture out such a night as this."—Adela attempted

attempted to dissuade him from it, but her voice was so low and faltering as scarcely to be articulate. Oscar gently seized her hand, and pulled it under his arm; he felt it tremble as he did so; the touch became contagious—an universal tremor affected his frame; and never, perhaps, had he and Adela experienced a moment of greater unhappiness. Adela at last found herself obliged to speak, conscious that her silence must appear particular, and said, she feared he would be injured by his attentions to her. —More fatally injured than he already was, he might have replied, he could not be; but he checked the words ready to burst from his lips, and only answered, that he should be unfit for a soldier, if he could not endure the inclemency of the wintry blast.

The light from the globes of the carriage gave him a view of her pale lovely cheeks, and he saw she was weeping. Confused at the idea of betraying her distress, she averted her head, and hastily ascended the steps; yet, for a moment, her trembling hand rested upon Oscar's, as if, in this manner, she would have given the adieu she had not the power of pronouncing. Lost in agony, he remained like a statue on the spot where she had left him, till roused by the friendly voice of Mrs. Marlowe, who, alarmed at his long absence, came to seek him. Soothed by her kind solicitude, he directly returned with her to the house, where his indignation against the perfidious Belgrave again broke forth; he execrated him, not only as the destroyer of his peace, but a peace infinitely

nately more precious than his own—that of the charming Adela.

Mrs. Marlowe essayed every art of consolation, and by sympathy and mildness, at last subdued the violence of his feelings. She acknowledged the loss he sustained in being deprived of Adela; but, since irrevocable, both virtue and reason required him to struggle against his grief, and conceal it: by their sacred dictates, she entreated him to avoid seeing Adela. He felt she was right in the entreaty, and solemnly promised to comply with it. Her friendship was balm to his wounded heart, and her society the only pleasure he was capable of enjoying. Whenever he could absent himself from quarters, he retired to her; and frequently spent three or four days at a time in her cottage. By discontinuing his visits in the gay neighbourhood of Woodlawn, he avoided all opportunities of seeing Adela; yet often, on a clear frosty night, has he stole from the fireside of Mrs. Marlowe, to the beloved and beautiful haunts about the lake, where he and Adela passed so many happy hours together. Here he indulged in all the luxury of woe: and such are the pleasures of virtuous melancholy, that Oscar would not have resigned them for any of the common-place enjoyments of life:

Often did he wander to the grove from whence he had a view of Adela's chamber; and if a lucky chance gave him a glimpse of her, as she passed through it, a sudden ecstasy would pervade his bosom—he would
 pray

pray for her felicity, and return to Mrs. Marlowe, as if his heart was lightened of an oppressive weight. That tender friend flattered herself, from youth and the natural gaiety of his disposition, his attachment, no longer fed by hope, would gradually decline ; but she was mistaken—the bloom of his youth was faded, and his gaiety converted into deep despondency. Had he never been undeceived with regard to the General and Adela, pride, no doubt, would quickly have lessened the poignancy of his feelings ; but when he reflected on the generous intentions of the one, on the sincere affection of the other, and the supreme happiness he might have enjoyed, he lost all fortitude. Thus, by perpetually brooding over the blessings once within his reach, losing all relish for those which were yet attainable, his sorrow, instead of being meliorated, was increased, by time. The horror and indignation with which he beheld Belgrave, after the first knowledge of his baseness, could scarcely be restrained : though painful, he was pleased the effort had proved a successful one, as, exclusive of his sacred promise to Mrs. Marlowe, delicacy on Adela's account induced him to bear his wrongs in silence. He could not, however, be so great a hypocrite, as to profess any longer esteem or respect for the Colonel ; and when they met, it was with cold politeness on both sides.

The unfortunate Adela pined in secret ; her interview with Oscar had destroyed the small remainder
of

of her peace : his pale and emaciated figure haunted her imagination. In vain, by dwelling on his unkind letter, did she endeavour to lessen her tenderness ; she felt the emotion of pity stronger than that of resentment, and that the friendship of Oscar would have been sweeter to her soul, than the love or attention of any other object. By obeying the impulse of passion, she feared she had doomed herself to wretchedness. Belgrave was a man whom, upon mature deliberation, she never could have chosen. The softness of his manners gradually vanished, when the purpose for which they had been assumed was completed. Unfeeling and depraved, the virtues of Adela could excite no esteem in his bosom ; and the love, if it can merit that appellation, which he had felt for her, quickly subsided after their marriage : but as the General retained the greatest part of his fortune in his own power, he continued tolerably guarded in his conduct. A slave, however, to the most violent passions, he was often unable to control them ; and forgetful of all prudential motives, delighted, at those times, in mortifying Adela by sly sarcasms on her attachment for Oscar.— Though deeply wounded ; she never complained ; she had partly forged her chains, and resolved to bear them without repining. Tranquil in appearance, the poor General, who was not penetrating, thought his darling perfectly happy. Such, however, was not the opinion of those who visited at Woodlawn : the

rose

rose of health no longer spread its beautiful tints on the cheek of Adela, nor were her eyes irradiated by vivacity.

The Colonel never went to Enniskillen, except about military business; but he made frequent excursions to the metropolis, and other parts of the kingdom, in pursuit of pleasure. Adela felt relieved by his absence; and the General, satisfied at his not attempting to take her along with him, never murmured at it.—The period now arrived for the departure of the regiment: Adela had not seen Oscar since the interview at Mrs. Marlowe's: she declined going to the reviews, which preceded the change of garrison, and sincerely hoped no chance would again throw him in her way. Oscar sickened at the idea of quitting the country without seeing her: he knew she was not to accompany the Colonel. The officers were going to pay a farewell visit to Woodlawn, and he could not resist being of the party. They were shewn into the drawing-room, where Adela and the General sat. She was startled at the appearance of Oscar; but, though a blush tinged her pale face, she soon recovered her composure, and entered into conversation. The General pressed them to stay dinner; but they had many visits to pay, and begged to be excused. "My dear Fitzalan," said the General, who had long dropped his displeasure, "I wish you happiness and success, and hope I shall soon hear of your being at the head of a company; remember—

remember I say soon, for I am an old veteran, and should be sorry to drop into the trench till I had heard of the good fortune of my friends. Your father was a brave fellow, and in the speedy advancement of his son, should receive a reward for his past services." Oscar pressed the General's hand to his breast; he cast his tearful eyes on Adela; she sighed, and bent hers to the ground. "Be assured, Sir," he cried, "no gratitude can be more fervent than that your goodness has inspired me with; no wishes can be more sincere than mine, for the happiness of the inhabitants of Woodlawn."—"Ineffectual wishes!" softly exclaimed Adela: "happiness, from one of its inhabitants at least, has, I fear, fled for ever."

The General's wishes for the success of Oscar may be considered as mere words of course, since not enforced by more substantial proofs of regard; but in reality, soon after his daughter's marriage, in his usual blunt manner, he had mentioned to the Colonel his intention of giving a thousand or two to help the promotion of Oscar. Belgrave, who could not bear that the man whom he had injured should have a chance of obtaining equal rank with himself, opposed this truly generous design, by saying, Oscar was taken under the patronage of Lord Cherbury, and that the General's bounty might therefore, at some future period, be better applied in serving a person without his interest. To this the General assented, declaring,

declaring, that he had never yet met with a brave soldier, or his offspring, in distress, without feeling, and answering the claim they had upon his heart.

Oscar obtained a ready promise from Mrs. Marlowe of corresponding with him: he blushed and faltered, as he besought her sometimes to acquaint him with the health of their friends at Woodlawn.

Change of scene produced no alteration in him: still pining with regret, and languid from ill health, his father and sister found him: the comforts of sympathy could not be his, as the anguish which preyed on his heart, he considered of too sacred a nature to divulge: he hoarded up his grief, like a miser hoarding up his treasure, fearful that the eye of suspicion should glance at it. As he pressed his lovely sister to his heart, had he imagined she was the object of Colonel Belgrave's licentious passion, the bounds he had hitherto prescribed to his resentment would, in a moment, have been overturned; and he would, had it been necessary, have pursued the monster round the world, to avenge the injury he had meditated, as well as the one he had committed.

We shall now bid adieu to Oscar for the present, and, drawing on our boots of seven leagues, step after Fitzalan and Amanda.

CHAP. XV.

Confess'd from yonder slow-extinguish'd clouds,
All ether softening, sober Evening takes
Her wonted station in the middle air;
A thousand shadows at her beck.

THOMSON.

CASTLE Carberry, to which our travellers were going, was a large Gothic pile, erected in the rude and distant period, when strength, more than elegance, was deemed necessary in a building. The depredations of war, as well as time, were discernible on its exterior: some of its lofty battlements were broken, and others mouldering to decay; while about its ancient towers

“ The rank grass wav'd its head,
And the moss whistled to the wind!”

It stood upon a rocky eminence, overhanging the sea, and commanding a delightful prospect of the opposite coast of Scotland: about it were yet to be traced irregular fortifications, a moat, and remains of a drawbridge, with a well, long since dry, which had been dug in the rock to supply the inhabitants, in times of siege, with water: on one side rose a stupendous hill, covered to the very summit with trees, and scattered over with relics of druidical antiquity: before it, stretched an extensive and gently-swelling

swelling lawn, sheltered on each side with groves of intermingled shade, and refreshed by a clear and meandering rivulet, that took its rise from the adjoining hill, and murmured over a bed of pebbles.

After a pleasant journey, on the evening of the fourth day, our travellers arrived at their destined habitation. An old man and woman, who had the care of it, were apprized of their coming; and on the first approach of the carriage, opened the massy door, and waited to receive them. They reached it when the sober grey of twilight had clad every object. Amanda viewed the dark and stupendous edifice, whose gloom was now heightened by the shadows of evening, with a solemn sensation: the solitude, the silence which reigned around; the melancholy murmur of the waves, as they dashed against the feet of the rocks—all heightened the sadness of her mind; yet it was not quite an unpleasing sadness, for with it was now mingled a degree of that enthusiasm which plaintive and romantic spirits are so peculiarly subject to feel, in viewing the venerable grandeur of an ancient fabric renowned in history. As she entered a spacious hall, curiously wainscotted with oak, ornamented with coats of arms, spears, lances, and old armour, she could not avoid casting a retrospective eye to former times, when, perhaps in this very hall, bards sung the exploits of those heroes whose useless arms now hung upon the walls. She wished, in the romance of the moment, some grey bard near her, to tell the deeds of other times

—of

—of kings renowned in our land, of chiefs we behold no more. In the niches in the hall were figures of chieftains, large as life, and rudely carved in oak : their frowning countenances struck a sudden panic upon the heart of Ellen—" Cot pless their souls," she said, " what the tefil do they do there, except to frighten the people from coming into the house !"

They were shewn into a large parlour furnished in an old-fashioned manner, and found a comfortable supper prepared for them : oppressed with fatigue, soon after they had partaken of it, they retired to rest. The next morning, immediately after breakfast, Amanda, attended by the old woman and Ellen, ranged over the Castle. Its interior was quite as Gothic as its exterior : the stairs were winding, the galleries intricate, the apartments numerous, and mostly hung with old tapestry, representing Irish battles, in which the chiefs of Castle Carberry were particularly distinguished : their portraits, with those of their ladies, occupied a long gallery, whose arched windows cast a dim religious light upon them : this was terminated by a small apartment, in the centre of one of the towers that flanked the building ; the room was octagon, and thus commanded a sea and land prospect, uniting at once the sublime and beautiful in it ; the furniture was not only modern, but elegant, and excited the particular attention and inquiries of Amanda. The old woman informed her, this had been the dressing-room of the late Countess of Cherbury, both before and after her marriage :

" one

“one of the sweetest, kindest ladies,” continued she, “I ever knew; the Castle has been quite deserted since she died. Alack-a-day! I thought my poor heart would have broke when I heard of her death. Ah! I remember the night I heard the Banshee crying so pitifully.”—“And pray, what is that?” interrupted Amanda.—“Why, a little woman, no higher than a yard, who wears a blue petticoat, a red cloak, and a handkerchief round her head; and when the head of any family, especially a great family, is to die, she is always heard, by some of the old followers, bemoaning herself.”—“Lort save us!” cried Ellen; “I hope his Lortship, the Earl, won’t take it into his head to die while we are here, for I’d as lief see one of the fairies of Penmaenmawr, as such a little old witch.”—“Well, proceed,” said Amanda.—“So, as I was saying, I heard her crying dismally one night, in a corner of the house; so says I to my husband, ‘Johnaten,’ says I, ‘I am sure we shall hear something about my good Lord or Lady;’ and sure enough we did the next day, and ever since we have seen none of the family.”—“Did you ever see the young Lord?” asked Amanda, with involuntary precipitation.—“See him! aye, that I did, when he was about eight years old: there is his picture,” pointing to one which hung over the chimney; “my Lady had it done by a fine English painter, and brought it over with her: it is the moral of what he then was.”

The eager eyes of Amanda were instantly turned
to

to it, and she traced, or at least imagined she did so, a resemblance still between it and him. The painter seemed as if he had had the description of Pity in his mind when he drew the picture, for Lord Mortimer was portrayed, as it is represented in the beautiful allegory, sheltering a trembling dove in his bosom from a ferocious hawk. "Oh Mortimer!" thought Amanda, "thy feeling nature is here justly delineated: the distressed, or the helpless, to the utmost of your power, you would save from the gripe of cruelty and oppression!"

Her father had desired her to choose pleasant apartments for her own immediate use, and she accordingly fixed on this and the room adjoining it, which had been Lady Cherbury's chamber: her things were brought hither, and her books, works, and implements for drawing, deposited in rich inlaid cabinets. Pleased with the arrangements she had made, she brought her father, as soon as he was at leisure, to view them. He was happy to find her spirits somewhat cheerful and composed, and declared, in future, he would call this Amanda's Tower. Accompanied by him, she ascended to the battlements of the Castle, and was delighted with the extensive and variegated prospect she beheld from them. A spacious edifice, at some distance, embowered in a grove of venerable oaks, attracted her admiration: her father told her that was Ulster Lodge, a seat belonging to the Marquis of Rosline, who was an Irish as well as a Scotch Peer, and had
very

very extensive possessions in Ireland : Fitzalan added, he had been inquiring of the old man about the neighbourhood, and learned from him, that, at the expiration of every three or four years, the Marquis usually came over to Ulster Lodge ; but had never yet been accompanied by the Marchioness, or Lady Euphrasia Sutherland, who was his only child.

The domestic economy of Castle Carberry was soon settled : a young man and woman were hired, as Johnaten and his wife Kate were considered little more than supernumeraries ; Ellen was appointed to attend Amanda, and do whatever plain-work was required. Fitzalan felt a pleasing serenity diffused over his mind, from the idea of being, in some degree, independent, and in the way of making some provision for his children.—The first shock of a separation from Lord Mortimer being over, the cheerfulness of Amanda gradually returned ; the visions of hope again revived in her mind, and she indulged a secret pleasure at living in the house he had once occupied. She considered her father as particularly connected with his family ; and doubted not, from this circumstance, she should sometimes hear of him : she judged of his constancy by her own, and believed he would not readily forget her. She acknowledged, her father's motives for separating them were equally just and delicate ; but firmly believed, if Lord Mortimer (as she flattered herself he would) confessed a partiality in her favour to his father, that, influenced by tenderness for his son,

friendship for her father, and the knowledge of her descent, he would immediately give up every idea of another connexion, and sanction theirs with his approbation. No obstacle appeared to such a union, but want of fortune; and that want she could never suppose would be considered as one by the liberal-minded Lord Cherbury, who had himself an income sufficient to gratify even luxurious wishes. Her time was agreeably diversified by the sources of amusement she drew from herself: her father, whose supreme felicity consisted in contributing to her pleasure, purchased a delightful harp for her in Dublin, which arrived, in a few days after them, at Castle Carberry; and with its dulcet lays she often charmed, not only his spirit, but her own, from every mortal care. She loved to rise early, and catch the first beams of the sun, as she wandered over the dewy lawn, where the lowing cattle cropped the flowery herbage, and the milkmaid sung her plaintive ditty.

With her father, she took long walks about the adjacent country. He had visited every scene before, and now pointed out whatever was worthy her attention—the spots where the heroes of former ages had fallen, where the mighty stones of their fame were raised; that the children of the north might hereafter know the places where their fathers fought; that the hunter, as he leaned upon a mossy tomb, might say, “Here fought the heroes of other years, and their fame shall last for ever.”

Amanda,

Amanda, too, often rambled by herself, particularly among the rocks, where were several natural grottoes, strewed with shells and sea-weeds. Here, of a mild day, she loved to read, and listen to the low murmurs of the tide. The opposite Scottish hills, among which her mother first drew breath, often attracted and fixed her attention, frequently drawing tears from her eyes, by awakening in her mind the recollection of that mother's sufferings.

On a morning, when she sat at work in her apartment, Ellen, who was considered more as a friend than a servant, sometimes sat with her. The conversation not unfrequently turned on Nurse Edwin's cottage, from which Ellen, with an arch simplicity, would advert to Tudor Hall, thence naturally to Lord Mortimer, and conclude with poor Chip, exclaiming, "What a pity true love should ever be crossed!"

CHAP. XVI.

— Some took him for a tool
That knaves do work with, call'd a fool :
Fools are known by looking wise,
As men find woodcocks by their eyes. HUDIBRAS.

THE solitude of Castle Carberry was interrupted, in less than a fortnight, by visits and invitations from the neighbouring families. The first they accepted, was to dinner, at Mr. Kilcorban's. He was a man of large fortune, which, in the opinion of many, compensated for the want of polished manners and a cultivated mind ; but others, of a more liberal way of thinking, could not possibly excuse those deficiencies, which were more apparent from his pretending to every excellence, and more intolerable from his deeming himself authorised, by his wealth and consequence, to say and do almost whatever he pleascd. His lady was, like himself, a compound of ignorance, pride, and vanity. Their offspring was numerous ; and the three who were sufficiently old to make their appearance, were considered, by their parents and themselves, as the very models of elegance and perfection. The young heir had been sent to the University ; but, permitted to be

be his own master, he had profited little by his residence there—enough, however, perhaps he thought, for a man of fortune, who wanted not professional knowledge. His face was coarse, his person inelegant, and his taste in adorning himself, preposterously ridiculous: fashion, Hoyle, and the looking-glass, were his chief studies; and, by his family and self, he was considered quite the thing.

The young ladies were supposed to be very accomplished, because they had instructors in almost every branch of education; but, in reality, they understood little more than the names of what they were attempted to be taught—Nature had not been lavish of her gifts: of this, however, they were unconscious; and patched, powdered, and painted, in the very extremity of the mode. Their mornings were generally spent in rolling about in a coach-and-six with their mamma, collecting news and paying visits; their evenings were constantly devoted to company, without which they declared they could not exist. They sometimes affected languor and sentiment, talked of friendship, and professed for numbers the most sincere; yet, to the very girls they pretended to regard, delighted in exhibiting their finery, if certain they could not purchase the same, and would feel mortified by seeing it.

Mr. Kilcorban had indulged his family in a trip to Bath one autumn, and, in so doing, had afforded a never-failing subject for conversation. Upon every occasion this delightful excursion was mentioned;

the novelties they saw, the admiration they excited, the elegant intimacies they formed, the amazing sum they expended, were all described, and exaggerated.

Lady Greystock, an ancient widow, was at present on a visit to them. She had known Fitzalan in his youth, and now, with pleasure, renewed her intimacy with him; and the account she gave of his family and connexions, prepossessed the neighbourhood in his favour. She was a shrewd, sensible woman; the dignity of her person commanded respect, but the sarcastic expression of her countenance prevented her conciliating esteem.

An old chariot belonging to the Earl of Cherbury, which had been, for years, unemployed in the coach-house, was brought forth, for the purpose of conveying Fitzalan and his daughter on their visits. After a good deal of rubbing and washing, it was found tolerably decent; and they proceeded in it to Mr. Kilcorban's, which was about two miles from Castle Carberry. A numerous party was already assembled. While Amanda was paying her compliments to Mrs. Kilcorban and Lady Greystock, a general whisper, relative to her, took place among the younger part of the company, who had formed themselves into a group quite distinct from the rest. One gentleman swore she was a devilish fine girl; he was seconded in the remark by another, who extolled her complexion.—“You are a simpleton!” cried a young lady, who was reckoned a great wit; “I would engage, for half-a-crown, to get as fine a colour

a colour in Dublin." Her companions laughed, and declared she only spoke truth in saying so. Mr. Bryan Kilcorban, who leaned on her chair, said, "A bill should be brought into the House to tax such complexions; for, kill me!" continued he, "the ladies are so irresistible from nature, it is quite unconscionable to call in art as an auxiliary." He then stalked over to Amanda, who sat by Lady Greystock. Lolling over her chair, he declared he thought the tedious hours would never elapse, till again blessed with her presence—of her whom, he said, it was sufficient to have but one glimpse, to make him pant for the second.

A summons to dinner relieved her from his nonsense: luxury and ostentation were conspicuous in the fare and decorations of the table; and Amanda never felt any hours so tedious as those she passed at it. When the ladies returned to the drawing-room, the Miss Kilcorbans and their companions began to examine and admire her dress.—"What a pretty pattern this gown is worked in!" said one.—"What a sweet becoming cap this is!" cried a second.—"Well, certainly the English milliners have a great deal of taste, my dear," said Miss Kilcorban, whispering Amanda. "I have a monstrous favour to ask of you," drawing her, at the same instant, to the window.—"I am sure," said Amanda, "any in my power to grant, I shall with pleasure."—"Oh! really, then, it is in your power; it is only to refuse the pattern of your cap to any
M 4 girls

girls who may ask you for it, and to give it me and my sister : you cannot conceive how we dote on being the first in the fashion, one is so stared at, and so envied—I detest any thing when it becomes common. You cannot think how we are teased every summer, when we return from Dublin, for fashions ; but we always make it a point to refuse.—I must tell you a delightful trick I played a friend of mine : she received a large present of the most beautiful muslins from India, which she laid by till I returned from town, supposing I would let her see my things, as I always told her I was extremely fond of her. Well, I lent her a gown, which was quite old-fashioned, but assured her it was the very newest mode : she accordingly had her beautiful muslins cut in imitation of it, and so spoiled them from making any other habit. Well, we met at an assize-ball, where all the elegant people of the country were assembled, and I declare I never saw so ridiculous a figure as she made. When she found herself unlike every one in the room, I really thought she would have fainted, and that my sister and I should have expired with laughing : poor thing ! the tears absolutely trickled down her cheeks. Do not you think it was a charming trick ?”—“ Very much so,” said Amanda ; “ I think it gave a striking specimen of your humour.”—“ Well, my dear,” exclaimed Miss Kilcorban, without minding the marked emphasis of Amanda’s last words, “ if you allow us, my sister and I will call on you to-morrow, to look over
your

your things.”—“ It would be giving yourselves a great deal of unnecessary trouble,” replied Amanda, coolly, who did not by any means relish this forward proposal ; “ my things can boast of little but simplicity, and I am always my own milliner.”—“ Really ! Well, I protest you have a great deal of taste. My maid, who is very handy, would, I think, be able to make up things in pretty much the same style, if you were obliging enough to give her patterns ; if you do, perhaps you will add to the favour, and allow us to say they are the newest Bath fashions. Was you ever at Bath ?”—“ No.”—“ Oh then, I assure you, you have a monstrous pleasure to come ; it is the sweetest place on earth—quite a paradise ! I declare I thought I should have died with grief at leaving it. Papa has been inexorable ever since, to our entreaties for a second trip ; he says the first cost too much money : indeed it was an enormous sum ; only think how much.”—“ I am the worst person in the world,” said Amanda, “ for guessing,” sick of her impertinent volubility, and moving from the window.—The evening was fine, and the grounds about the house beautiful ; she therefore proposed a walk. At this proposal the young ladies, who had hitherto been in deep confab, looked at each other, and remained silent for some minutes. Miss Kilcorban then, who had no notion of gratifying the inclination of her guest by the sacrifice of her own, said, it blew a little, and that her hair would be ruined, and the Marechelle

M 5.

powder.

powder blown from it by such a walk : another young lady, looking down at her white satin slippers, vowed she would not venture into the grass for worlds : a third declared, when once dressed, she could not bear to be tumbled. Amanda had too much politeness to repeat her wish ; and it was therefore unanimously agreed among the fair coterie, that they should continue in the drawing-room, to be in *statu quo* for the reappearance of the beaux.

Lady Greystock now beckoned to our heroine to take a seat by her. She gladly obeyed. " Well, my dear," said her Ladyship, " I hope you have had enough of these country misses, these would-be misses of the *ton*."—Amanda smiled assentingly.—" Heaven defend me, or any one I like," continued her Ladyship, " from their clack ! The confusion of Babel was, I really believe, inferior to that their tongues create ; yet some people have the absurdity to reckon these girls accomplished. Poor Mrs. Kilcorban torments one with the perfections of her daughters : against they are disposed of, which she imagines will be very soon, she has a new brood of Graces training up to bring out. Mercy on me, what a set of hoidens ! I would lay my life, at this very instant, they are galloping about the nursery like a parcel of wild colts, tearing or tormenting an unfortunate French governess, who was formerly *fille de chambre* to a woman of quality, and does not understand even the grammatical part of her own language."—" Mrs. Kilcorban's opinion of her children,"

dren," said Amanda, "is natural, considering the partiality of a parent."—"Yes; but not more bearable on that account," replied her Ladyship; "and I should endeavour to open her eyes to her folly, if I thought her acquaintance would forgive my depriving them of such a fund of amusement."

Mr. Bryan Kilcorban, with some gentlemen, now entered the room, and advanced to Amanda. "So," said he, "you have got by the Dowager. Hang me, but I would let my beard grow, if all women resembled her in their dispositions."—"By way of appearing sagacious, I suppose," said her Ladyship, who was extremely quick, and had caught the last words. "Alas, poor youth! no embellishments on the exterior would ever be able to make us believe the tenement within well furnished."—Her Ladyship was now summoned to a whist-table, and Miss Kilcorban immediately took her vacant seat: "My dear creature," said she, "are you not bored to death? Lady Greystock is a queer piece, I can assure you. I suppose she was asking some favour from you, such as to work her an apron or handkerchief: she is noted every where for requesting such little jobs, as she calls them. Indeed we should never put up with the trouble she gives us, but that she is vastly rich, and papa's relation, and has no one so nearly connected with her as we are."—"All very good reasons for your complaisance," replied Amanda; "but should you not be more careful in concealing them?"—"Oh Lord, no!—every one

knows them as well as we do ourselves. She was here last summer, and took a fancy to the pattern of an apron of mine, and made me the reasonable request of working one like it for her: all this, she pretended, was to prevent my being idle. Well, I said I would, and wrote up to the Moravian-house in Dublin, where I had got mine, for one exactly like it. In due time I received and presented it to the Dowager, certain that, in return, I should receive a few of her diamond-pins, which she had often heard me admire—they are the prettiest I ever saw, and quite unfit for her; but she had the cruelty to disappoint me.”—“Upon my faith,” cried Mrs. Kilcorban, who had taken a chair at the other side of Amanda, and listened with evident pleasure to her daughter’s voluble speech, “Lady Greystock is an odd being! I never met with any one like her, in all my travels through England, Ireland, and Wales; but she is a great orator, and possesses the gift of the gab in a wonderful degree.”—“Aye, indeed,” thought Amanda; “and you and your fair daughters resemble her in that respect.”

After tea, she was prevailed on to sit down to commerce; but she soon grew as tired of the party as of the game, and lost, on purpose to be released. She had hoped for a little more chat with Lady Greystock, but her Ladyship was passionately fond of cards, and at all times would have preferred the pleasures of a card-table to the eloquence of a Cicero. Kilcorban, on finding her disengaged, tormented her
with

with absurd compliments ; a challenge to a brag-table at length relieved her from his nonsense, and she loitered about the card-tables till they broke up for supper.

Amanda always expressed to her father her sentiments of any company she had been in ; and those she now delivered, on quitting the party, perfectly coincided with his. He laughed at the account which the Kilcorbans had given of Lady Greystock, to whom he knew they paid the most extravagant flattery, in hopes of obtaining some of her large fortune.

CHAP. XVII.

Remote from man, with God they pass'd their days ;
Prayer all their business, all their pleasure praise. PARNELL

THE following evening they were engaged to spend at a farmer's. The invitation was given with such humility, yet pressed with such warmth, that they could not avoid accepting it ; and accordingly, soon after dinner, walked to the house, which was about a mile from Castle Carberry. It was a low thatched building ; every appendage to it bespoke neatness and comfort. It was situated in a beautiful meadow, enclosed from the road by a hawthorn hedge ; and on the opposite side lay an extensive common,

on which stood the stupendous and venerable ruins of an abbey, called St. Catherine's. They appeared a melancholy monument of the power of time over strength and grandeur; and while they attracted the observation of the curious, excited a sigh in the bosom of sensibility.

The farmer's family consisted of three daughters and two sons, who were now dressed in their best array. They had assembled a number of their neighbours, among whom was a little fat priest, called Father O'Gallaghan, considered the life of every party, and a blind piper. The room was small, and crowded with furniture, as well as company: it was only divided from the kitchen by a short passage; and the steam of hot cakes, and the smoke of a turf fire, which issued thence, soon rendered it distressingly warm. Amanda got as near the window as possible, but still could not procure sufficient air; and as every thing for tea was not quite ready, asked one of the Miss O'Flannaghans if she would accompany her to St. Catherine's? She answered in the affirmative. The priest, who had been smirking at her ever since her entrance, now shook his fat sides, and said, he wished he could get her initiated there; "for it would do my soul good," cried he, "to confess such a pretty little creature as you are; though, faith, I believe I should find you like Paddy M'Denough, who used to come to confession every Easter, though the devil a thing the poor man had to confess about at all at all; so, says I to him,

' Paddy,

‘Paddy, my jewel,’ says I, ‘I believe I must make a saint of you, and lay you on the altar.’—‘Oh honey, Father,’ cried he, ‘not yet awhile, till I get a new suit of clothes on, which I shall get by next Michaelmas.’ Amanda left them all laughing at this story; and her father engaged in conversation with some farmers, who were desiring his interest with Lord Cherbury for new leases, on moderate terms.

Amanda had about a quarter of a mile to walk across the common; the ground was marshy and uneven, and numerous stumps of trees denoted its having once been a noble forest, of which no memorial but these stumps, and a few tall trees immediately near the Abbey, remained, that stretched their venerable arms around it, as if to shade that ruin whose progress they had witnessed, and which Amanda found well worthy of inspection. She was equally astonished at its elegance and extent; and with sacred awe traversed the spacious cloisters—the former walks of holy meditation. She pursued her way through winding passages, where vestiges of cells were yet discernible, over whose mouldering arches the grass waved in rank luxuriance, and the creeping ivy spread its gloomy foliage, and viewed with reverence the graves of those who had once inhabited them: they surrounded that of the founder, which was distinguished by a cross, and Miss O’Flannaghan related the traditions that were current concerning him. He was a holy monk, who had the care of a
pious

pious lady's conscience. She, on her death-bed, had a remarkable dream or vision, in which she thought an angel appeared, and charged her to bequeath her wealth to her confessor, who would, no doubt, make a much better use of it than those she designed it for. She obeyed the sacred injunction; and the good man immediately laid the foundation of this Abbey, which he called after his benefactress, and to which he, and the community he belonged to, removed. The chapel was roofless, but still retained many relics of superstitious piety, which had escaped, in a tolerable degree, both time and weather. Saints and martyrs were curiously cut over the places where the altars and cisterns for holy water had once stood, to which Amanda passed through a long succession of elegant arches, among which were a number of tomb-stones, with curious devices and unintelligible inscriptions. Half hid by grass and weeds, on a flag, which, she perceived, must have been lately placed there, she saw some faded flowers strewn; and, looking at her companion, saw a tear dropping from her on them. She gently asked the cause of it, and heard a favourite brother was interred there. The girl moved from the spot; but Amanda, detained by an irrepressible emotion, staid a minute longer, to contemplate the awful scene. All was silent, sad, and solitary; the grass-grown aisles looked long untrodden by human foot, the green and mouldering walls appeared ready to crumble into atoms, and the wind, which howled through their crevices,

crevices, sounded, to the ear of fancy, as sighs of sorrow for the desolation of the place. Full of moralizing melancholy, the young, the lovely Amanda, hung over the grave of her companion's youthful brother; and taking up the withered flower, wet with the tear of sisterly affection, dropped another on it, and cried, "Oh, how fit an emblem is this of life! how illustrative of these words!—'Man comes forth as a flower of the field, and is soon cut down.'"

Miss O'Flannaghan now led her through some more windings, when, suddenly emerging from them, she found herself, to her great surprise, in a large garden entirely encompassed by the ruins; and in the center of it stood a long low building, which her companion informed her was a convent. A folding-door, at the side, opened into the chapel, which they entered, and found a nun praying.

Amanda drew back, fearful of disturbing her; but Miss O'Flannaghan accosted her without ceremony; and the nun returned the salutation, with the most cordial good humour. She was fifty, as Amanda afterwards heard; for she never could, from her appearance, have conceived her to be so much. Her skin was fair, and perfectly free from wrinkle; the bloom and down upon her cheeks, as bright and as soft as that upon a peach: though her accent at once proclaimed her country, it was not unharmonious; and the cheerful obligingness of her manner amply compensated for the want of elegance. She

wore

wore the religious habit of the house, which was a loose flannel dress, bound round her waist by a girdle, from which hung her beads and a cross ; a veil of the same stuff descended to the ground, and a mob-cap and forehead-cloth quite concealed her hair.* Miss O'Flannaghan presented Amanda to her as a stranger, who wished to see every thing curious in the chapel.—“ Ah, my honey,” cried she, “ I am sorry she is come at a time when she will see us all in the dismal ; for, you know, we are in mourning for our Prioress—(the altar was hung with black). But, my dear,” turning to Amanda, “ do you mean to come here next Sunday ? for, if you do, you will find us all bright again.”—Upon Amanda's answering in the negative, she continued—“ Faith, and I am sorry for that, for I have taken a great fancy to you ; and when I like a person, I always wish them as great a chance of happiness as I have myself.”—Amanda, smiling, said, she believed none could desire a greater ; and the nun obligingly proceeded to shew her all the relics and finery of the chapel : among the former was a head belonging to one of the eleven thousand virgin-martyrs, and the latter, a chest full of rich silks, which pious ladies had given for the purpose of dressing the altar : pulling a drawer from under it, she displayed a quantity of artificial flowers, which, she

* The Abbey and the nun which the author has attempted to describe, were such as she really saw, but in a different part of Ireland from that which she has mentioned.

said, were made by the Sisters and their scholars. Amanda wished to make a recompence for the trouble she had given, and, finding they were to be sold, purchased a number, and having given some to Miss O'Flannaghan, whom she observed viewing them with a wishful eye, she left the rest with the nun, promising to call for them the ensuing day.—“Aye, do,” said she, “and you may be sure of a sincere welcome; you will see a set of happy poor creatures, and none happier than myself. I entered the convent at ten; I took the vows at fifteen; and, from that time to the present, which is a long stretch, I have passed a contented life—thanks be to our blessed Lady!” raising her sparkling eyes to heaven.

They ascended a few steps to the place where the community sat: it was divided from the body of the chapel by a slight railing. Here stood the organ. The nun sighed, as she looked at it: “Poor Sister Agatha!” cried she, “we shall never get such another organist: she was always fit indeed for the heavenly choir.—Oh, my dear,” turning to Amanda, “had you known her, you would have loved her. She was our late Prioress, and elected to that office at twenty-nine, which is reckoned an early age for it, on account of the cleverness it requires. She had held it but two years when she died, and we were never so comfortable as during her time, she managed so well. The mourning in the chapel, as I have already told you, will be over for her next Sunday;

Sunday ; but that which is in our hearts, will not be so speedily removed."

Miss O'Flannaghan now reminded Amanda it was time to return, to which, with secret reluctance, she consented. The nun pressed her to stay tea ; but, on hearing of her engagement, only reminded her of the promised visit. In their walk back, her companion informed Amanda that the society consisted of twelve nuns : their little fortunes, though sunk in one common fund, were insufficient to supply their necessities, which compelled them to keep a day-school, in which the neighbouring children were instructed in reading, writing, plain-work, embroidery, and artificial flowers. She also added, that the nuns were allowed to go out, but few availed themselves of that liberty, and that, except in fasting, they were strangers to the austerities practised in foreign convents.

For such a society, Amanda thought nothing could be better adapted than their present situation : sheltered by the ruins, like the living entombed among the dead, their wishes, like their views, were bounded by the mouldering walls, as no object appeared beyond them which could tempt their wandering from their usual limits. The dreary common which met the view, could not be more bleak and inhospitable than the world in general would have proved to these children of poverty and nature.

Father O'Gallaghan met the ladies at the door,
and,

and, familiarly taking Amanda's hand, said, "Why, you have staid long enough to be made a nun of: here, the cakes are buttered, the tea made, and we all waiting for you. Ah, you little rogue!" smirking in her face, "by the head of St. Patrick, those twinklers of yours were not given for the good of your soul! here you are come to play pell-mell among the hearts of the honest Irish lads. Ah! the devil a doubt but you will have mischief enough to answer for by-and-by; and then, I suppose, you will be coming to me to confess and absolve you; but remember, my little honey, if you do, I must be paid beforehand." Amanda disengaged her hand, and entered the parlour, where the company, by a display of pocket-handkerchiefs on their laps, seemed prepared to make a downright meal of the good things before them. The Miss O'Flannaghans, from the toils of the tea-table, at last grew as red as the ribbon with which they were profusely ornamented. The table at length removed, the chairs arranged, and benches placed in the passage for the old folks, the signal for a dance was given by the piper's playing an Irish jig. The farmer's eldest son, habited in his new sky-blue coat, his hair combed sleek on his forehead, and his complexion as bright as a full-blown poppy, advanced to our heroine, and begged, with much modesty and many bows, she would do him the favour to stand up with him. She hesitated a little, when Father O'Gallaghan giving her a tap, or rather a slap on the shoulder, made her start suddenly

denly from her seat. He laughed heartily at this, declaring he liked to see a girl alive and merry. As he could not join in the dance, he consoled himself with being master of the ceremonies, and insisted on Amanda's dancing, and leading off the "Priest in his Boots." She felt little inclined to comply; but she was one of those who can sacrifice their own inclination to that of others. Being directed in the figure by the priest, she went down the dance; but the floor being an earthen one, by the time she had concluded it, she begged they would excuse her sitting the remainder of the evening, she felt so extremely fatigued.

She and Fitzalan would gladly have declined staying supper; but this they found impossible, without either greatly mortifying, or absolutely offending, their hospitable entertainers. The table was covered with a profusion of good country fare, and none seemed to enjoy it more truly than the priest. In the intervals of eating, his jests flew about in every direction. The scope he gave to his vivacity, exhilarated the rest; so that, like Falstaff, he was not only witty himself, but a promoter of wit in others. "Pray, Father," said a young man to him, "what do you give in return for all the good cheer you get?"—"My blessing, to be sure," replied he; "what better could I give?"—"Aye, so you may think: but that is not the case with us all, I promise you. It is so pat, I must tell you a story about the same thing called a priest's blessing. A
poor

poor man went one day to a priest, who had the name of being very rich, and very charitable; but as all we hear is not gospel, so the poor man doubted a little the truth of the latter report, and resolved on trying him. ‘Father,’ says he, ‘I have met with great losses; my cabin was burned, my pigs stolen, and my cow fell into a ditch, and broke her neck; so I am come to ask your Reverence, for the love of Heaven, to lend me a crown.’—‘A crown!’ repeated the angry and astonished priest: ‘Oh, you rogue! where do you think I could get money to lend, except, like yourself, I had pilfered and stolen?’—‘Oh! that is neither here nor there,’ replied the man: ‘you know I cleared the score on my conscience with you long ago; so tell me, Father, if you will lend me half-a-crown?’—‘No, nor a shilling.’—‘Well, a farthing then; any thing from such a good man as you.’—‘No,’ said the priest, ‘not a mite.’—‘Mayn’t I have your blessing?’ then asked the man.—‘Oh! that you shall, and welcome,’ replied he, smiling.—‘Why then, Father,’ returned the other, ‘I would refuse it, if you forced it upon me; for, do you see, had it been worth one farthing, you would have refused it to me.’

“You have put me in mind of a very curious story,” exclaimed another young man, as this one concluded his. “A young knight went into a chapel in Spain one morning, where he observed a monk standing in a supplicating attitude, with a box in his hand. He asked him what this was for? and learned,

learned, to collect money for praying the souls of fifty Christians out of purgatory, whom the Moors had murdered. The knight threw a piece of money into the box ; and the monk, after repeating a short prayer, exclaimed, ' There is one soul redeemed.' The knight threw in a second ; and the priest, after the same ceremony, cried, ' There is another free.' Thus they both went on, one giving and the other praying, till, by the monk's account, all the souls were free.—' Are you sure of this?' inquired the knight.—' Aye,' replied the priest; ' they are all assembled together at the gate of heaven, which St. Peter gladly opened for them, and they are now joyfully seated in paradise.'—' From whence they cannot be removed, I suppose?' said the knight.—' Removed!' repeated the astonished priest; ' no, the world itself might be easier moved.'—' Then, if you please, holy Father, return me my ducats; they have accomplished the purpose for which they were given: and as I am only a poor cavalier, without a chance of being as happily situated, at least for some years, as the souls we have mutually contributed to release, I stand in greater need of them.'"

Fitzalan was surprised at the freedom with which they treated the priest; but he laughed as merrily as the rest at their stories; for he knew that, though they sometimes allowed themselves a little latitude, they neither wished nor attempted to shake off his power.

Fitzalan and Amanda withdrew as speedily as possible

sible from the party, which, if it wanted every other charm, had that of novelty at least to them. The next morning Amanda repaired to the Convent, and inquired for Sister Mary, the good-natured nun she had seen the preceding evening. She immediately made her appearance, and was delighted at seeing Amanda. She conducted her to the school-room, where the rest of the nuns and pupils were assembled ; and Amanda was delighted with the content and regularity which appeared in the society, as well as the obliging eagerness they shewed to gratify her curiosity. They led her through the house, which contained a number of apartments, every nun having one to herself, furnished with a bed, chair, table, and crucifix ; and then to the parlour, where their new Prioress sat. She was a woman far advanced in life. Had a painter wanted to personify benevolence, he might have chosen her for a model—so soft, so benignant was her countenance. Sorrow, as well as time, had marked it deeply ; but the mild expression of her eyes announced the most perfect resignation to that sorrow. She received Amanda with the truest politeness, and most friendly warmth ; and Amanda felt impressed with real reverence for her : whilst she acknowledged, in her mind, there could not be a happier situation for her than her present, she thought it a pity the world had been deprived of a woman who would have proved such an ornament to it. Sister Mary disappeared, but returned, in a few minutes, with cakes and currant

wine, which she forced Amanda to take. The good sister was enchanted with her young visitor ; and, having no idea of concealing her feelings, she openly expressed her admiration. “ Dear mother,” said she, addressing the Prioress, “ is she not a lovely creature ? What pretty eyes she has got, and what sweet little hands ! Oh ! if our blessed Lady would but touch her heart, and make her become one of us, I should be so happy ! ”—The Prioress smiled ; she was not so great an enthusiast as Sister Mary. “ It would be a pity,” said she, “ so sweet a flower should be hid amidst the ruins of St. Catherine’s.”

Amanda made an addition to her flowers : she was thanked by the nuns, and entreated to favour them often with a visit. Just as she reached Castle Carberry, she saw the Kilcorbans’ carriage stop at it, from which Lady Greystock and the young ladies alighted. They both spoke at once, and so extremely fast, that Amanda scarcely understood what they said : they declared a thousand impertinent visitors had prevented their coming the preceding morning, and looking at the things she had obligingly promised to shew them. Amanda recollected no such promise, but would not contradict them, and permitted their taking what patterns they liked. Lady Greystock smiled sarcastically at her young kinswomen ; and expressing a wish to see the Castle, Amanda led her through it. Her Ladyship was particularly pleased with the dressing-room. Here the young ladies, with rude and eager curiosity, examined

mined every thing ; but her Ladyship, who was full as curious as themselves, could not condemn freedoms she took herself. Observing a petticoat in a tambour-frame, she admired the pattern ; and hearing it was designed by Amanda, extolled her fine taste, and declared she should, of all things, like to have one worked in the same. This hint was too plain to pass unnoticed : Amanda wished to oblige, particularly any one advanced in life, and told her Ladyship she would work one for her. Lady Greystock smiled most graciously at this, and pressing her hand, declared she was a charming girl. The Miss Kilcorbans winked slyly, and, taking her hand in turn, assured her they had conceived a most ardent friendship for her, and hoped she would often favour them with her company. Amanda answered those insincere professions with cool civility, and the visitors departed.

END OF VOL. I.

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